

RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION.

Ex. XXXII.

How bitter must have been the feelings of Moses, as he passed down from Mount Sinai into the camp of the Israelites! His people had been delivered from slavery, and deemed worthy of a divine revelation. The ten commandments had laid the foundation of a new social and religious order. Forty days and nights had Moses passed upon the mountain-top in spiritual activity, rearing, with the divine aid, upon this foundation, the structure of Israel's Law. Finally, the system stood before his mental vision, complete in every detail. Law and law-giver alike were prepared for their work. The chosen people of the future stood, at the foot of the mountain, awaiting his return.

The forty days and nights of the isolation of Moses had not been passed only in a literal sense upon a mountain-top; in imagination, Moses had reached the summit of his hopes. Suddenly the call came to him: "Descend from the height of idealism. Far, far below you lies hideous reality. Think no more of the proud structure which you fondly hoped to rear, for the very foundation is sunken. The sound of the first word of the commandment has died away among your people."

The descent of Moses from Mount Sinai and his return to the camp may most aptly be characterized by

the German phrase, "*vom Himmel gefallen*;"* truly he had fallen from the heaven of his hopes and ideals. Nevertheless, he took with him the tables of stone, and surely not for the purpose of destroying them. He had *heard* the evil news, and it pierced his very soul, but he had not yet *seen* what had occurred; his heart was saddened within him, but the dreadful tidings had not benumbed his reason. Thus Moses moved towards the camp with troubled soul, but calm and deliberate of mind. In his conversation with Joshua concerning the meaning of the noise in the camp, he found it impossible to tell his companion openly of that which he knew had happened. When, however, he saw before his eyes the evidence of the miserable backsliding of the people, the full consciousness of the wreck of his life's work broke in upon him. His wrath flared up in him, and the tables of stone, testifying to his people's mission, lay shattered at his feet. Without faithful believers, they were utterly worthless.

He who, like Moses, has seen his life-work crumble away before his eyes, or who, teaching in the fond belief that he is training a community of wise and good men, finds that his scholars are brutes and fools; whoever has lived in the sweet dream of having established a new order of truth and light, of love and justice, and awakes to find the old misery, the old error, the same darkness of the spirit as of old—he, indeed, will not censure the faithful servant of the Lord for his loss of self-control, nor chide him for acting like an ordinary mortal, and breaking even the most precious possession of his house in the moment of anger.

* An idiomatic expression for keen and sudden disappointment.—[Tr.]

His was holy wrath !

Nothing in this world is absolutely good or absolutely bad. Wheat, the bread-giver, is but a weed, if it grow in an inappropriate spot, while the deadly nightshade may, under certain circumstances, prove a precious plant. So, too, wise deliberation, and so, powerful wrath, dreadful to see and destructive in its effects ; respectively, they are not absolutely good, not absolutely bad. The conduct of Aaron is a case in point. He beheld the stream of evil running ever higher. He saw that it threatened to break through all the dikes set up to resist its course. He carefully and prudently considered how useless it would be for him to attempt to stem this wild current of opposition. The flood-gates were broken down, and through them the rabble poured in an unchecked stream, leaving destruction in its wake. Aaron comforted himself, as any cool, deliberate man might do, with the reflection that the catastrophe was inevitable. When called to account by Moses, he said to him : "Thou knowest the people, that it is bent on mischief," meaning, "I could not prevent them from carrying out their wishes. Opposition, on my part, would have cost me my life." Thus is Aaron represented to us in this narrative, a reed bending before the storm, a sheep fleeing from wolves.

What a contrast to the behavior of Moses ! In his righteous indignation, he stormed into the very midst of the intoxicated masses, dashing the tables of stone into pieces before their eyes, and seizing their god, he ground him into powder. The multitude gathered about the calf scattered in affright. Moses despatched the Levites to seize the ringleaders of rebellion, and the blood of three thousand of them was poured out on the desert

sands. Order was restored in the camp. Such was the work of wrath, fanned into a flame by the spirit of holiness. In considering another Biblical section, we had occasion to remark that cursing, a universal practice in ancient times, was gradually vanishing with the spread of culture; so, too, with anger. As civilization progresses, calm deliberation gradually takes the place of passionate action, and especially does it supplant wrath as a method of adjusting a difficulty. A cultured man of our day is as ashamed of manifesting anger as of swearing. Persons of intelligence discuss and argue questions of state, of the congregation, of the family, of business, etc., without passion. They fight with arguments, but not with venom and blood. The uncultured, on the other hand, in their intercourse with their fellow-man, are ever on the verge of a crater. From its mouth, the fire of wrath may burst forth at any moment.

It must, in justice, be said of the citizens of our country that outbursts of passionate wrath are less frequent among them than in any other nation of the earth. They act with prudence and deliberation in cases in which others employ violent means to secure their ends. The American may even commit murder, or wreak bloody revenge without ceasing to be a gentleman in outward bearing. But it must not be overlooked that there is a dark side to this decline of violent passion. Crimes that arouse the righteous indignation of all good people of other lands are here disposed of with the utmost coolness by people and judge alike. As evil courses lose the shame formerly attached to them, indignation and stern justice also decline. Crimes do not bring dishonor to the offender; they are simply

“settled,” to use a common phrase. When brought before a judge they are adjusted, and pardon may be granted if sentence of condemnation be passed.

Our sages tell us the story that, in view of the havoc wrought by passion in the moral world, the evil genius was pursued, and finally driven into an iron cage, and the cage was carefully locked. Soon, however, it became evident that it was impossible for the world to exist without passion, and so passion was again set at liberty, but was first blinded so that it should no longer choose for itself a path of destruction, but would be constrained to act as a slave to the moral nature.

Pre-eminent goodness, truth and beauty are always the offspring of passion. Deliberation and careful thought do not fall into error easily, but, on the other hand, they lack the creative power which alone can raise actions above the level of the commonplace, nor can they boast the power of self-sacrifice, the inevitable price of greatness.

How excellent is a little righteous indignation in many of the affairs of life, the less important as well as those of greater moment! For example, if parents were always to take all possible, mitigating circumstances into consideration in their dealings with their children, they would in each case overlook the fault, ever excusing it and delaying punishment. Forbearance is a convenient virtue, and one appealing with force to a parent's feelings. Fortunately, however, fathers and mothers are now and again, to the great advantage of their children, filled with righteous indignation, and the children, in turn, under the inspiration

of wholesome respect, for once are made to feel the value of a serious education.

So, too, husband and wife, holding the sanctity of the marriage bond at its true worth, forbear to speak of each other's weaknesses; they go on their way without improving, and their mutual respect weakens in proportion to the strength of their failings. Suddenly, one or the other is filled with righteous indignation; involuntarily a word of censure is dropt, which, severely as it may smart, is salutary in effect.

A thunder-burst of righteous indignation might occasionally be of good service in clearing the air in the legislative halls of state and community, where excessive cleverness and hair-splitting debate so frequently hinder healthy progress.

Let us imagine Moses entering one of our synagogues. His eye would light upon the memorial tables, which usually occupy so prominent a place in our houses of worship, and he would ask one of the many Israelitish children present, probably a non-attendant or an irregular attendant at the religious school—if, indeed, a school exists—"Do you know the ten commandments? Can you read the words inscribed upon that tablet? Do you know the name of the first letter?" "*No!*" would be the answer to each question. I believe the spirit of his ancient, holy wrath would overcome him, and once more he would dash the tables of stone into fragments!

We no longer know righteous indignation in such matters. Civilization tames men and ennobles human nature. We see and hear much that is displeasing to us without giving way to ungovernable wrath. Blessed be this achievement of true culture! It is well for us

not to allow our wrath constantly to grow hot within us. Temper its fire with reason. Nevertheless, it might also be well for us to preserve in our souls the *capacity* for righteous indignation, so that we may know whether there glows on the altars of our hearts a spark of reverence and love for truth, morality and the religion of our fathers; a spark live enough to be fanned into a flame, should danger threaten the most precious of human possessions.

THE SABBATH.

"Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord; whosoever doth work thereon shall be put to death."—Ex. XXXV : 2.

Cosmogonies, even older than that of Israel, were current among the heathen nations; but in character and contents, they differ entirely from the Mosaic narrative. They begin with the creation of the gods; they relate how one deity produced another; how the gods multiplied; how they formed ranks and classes; how they fought with one another, and still continue to do so, while the world and what it contains are mentioned only incidentally as parts of creation. The Mosaic narrative, on the other hand, unrolls a picture of the creation of the heavenly bodies, of minerals, plants, animals, and finally of man, but no superhuman elements are introduced into the story. "In the beginning" the one, *uncreated* God stands alone in awful majesty, and when the work is finished, God is still the Only One, with the Sabbath as a witness of the *completion* of the work of creation. Thus, no opportunity is left for the idolatrous imagination to fill out details. The celebration of the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week proclaims to the world אני ראשון ואני אחרון ומבלערי אין אלהים "I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God." It matters not what objections may be urged against the theory of the creation of the world in six days; it

is immaterial whether these days denote indefinite periods of time, or do not admit of literal interpretation; the essential point in the narrative is the exhaustive enumeration of created objects, in which there is no mention of any being higher than man, neither gods nor spirits. "Before the world was brought forth," there was but one God, and when the work of creation was finished, our God was still the Only One. The Sabbath is, therefore, mentioned in connection with the story of creation as the "sign forever" between God and Israel. As the seventh day Sabbath is the expression of Israel's belief in one God, so it also serves to emphasize another fundamental idea of Israel's religion, the idea of *man* in the noblest sense of the term. In the repetition of the ten commandments in the fifth book of Moses, we read that the Sabbath is to serve as a memorial of the deliverance from Egyptian slavery, for a slave cannot make a Sabbath for himself; he cannot say, "I require rest; to-day, I will cease from work;" or, "To-day, I will occupy my mind with other thoughts than of my daily occupations." Day and night, whether physically fresh and vigorous, or worn out with toil, he must be ready to do his master's bidding. In ceasing from labor regularly on one day of each week, on the other hand, we testify to our right to make what disposition we will of ourselves, and to our liberty and equality in all human rights and privileges. To-day, we do not stand alone in the enjoyment of this privilege, all civilized nations share it with us, and, in a short time, we may look for the complete disappearance of slavery as a condition recognized and allowed by law. But at the time of the promulgation of the Sinaitic code, and, in-

deed, for thousands of years after that day, even down to our own times, slavery and serfdom were considered natural conditions throughout the world. The horrors of bondage among the Greeks and Romans can scarcely be adequately described. Serfs were no better than beasts in the eyes of their masters. Condemnation to slavery was scarcely preferable to sentence of death, for the slave belonged to his master, body and soul. Neither can the free men of those times be considered men in the best sense of the word. In Rome, there were Romans; in Athens, Athenians; the rest of mankind were barbarians, helots and provincials. Even the Roman was not a man with all a man's rights and privileges, for his rank determined his condition. He was patrician or plebeian, patron or client. As a patrician, he was more than an ordinary man; as a plebeian, his rights and privileges were less than those becoming a human being. It is true, in the course of the year, the slaves enjoyed some days of privilege, on which their masters waited on them; but those days were marked by all manner of outrageous proceedings, of debauchery and immorality. There was no thought of so great a privilege for the slave as a fixed, weekly day of rest. The word humanity, in our day, is on the lips of every one. The term is Latin in derivation, but its import is Israelitish, and the Sabbath is the upholder of this idea, as it is the foundation upon which rests the belief in God.

The rabbinical conception of Judaism, in this as in other instances, shows a degeneration from the Mosaic idea. Among the prayers of thanksgiving in the daily service the rabbis included these three: thanks for having been created an Israelite, for not having been

created a slave, and not a woman. According to the Mosaic idea, however, he that is born an Israelite cannot be a slave; indeed, it is hardly proper to refer to slavery in a prayer, and thus apparently recognize it as a divine institution. Here, as elsewhere, we cannot fail to observe the influence of heathen schools upon Jewish thought. It is told of Thales, one of the seven Wise Men, that he, too, daily returned thanks to the gods for having been born a Greek, a man, and free. Judaism has, at all times, suffered in health from the effects of the spiritual draughts blowing upon it from without.

Examples are not wanting in daily life of men of great wealth, who, seeing deserved or undeserved financial ruin impending, seek help in vain far and wide among strangers, and, to their surprise, succeed in finding the much needed succor close at hand. The wise *woman* of the household had quietly laid aside somewhat of their abundance in the days of good fortune, and so helped to save the home in the hour of danger.

We dare not close our eyes to our critical position in regard to the seventh day Sabbath, as far as the youths and men in Israel are concerned. The Jew, formerly so rich in Sabbaths and festivals, now finds himself utterly destitute of Holy Days, or sees the time fast coming, when he will be stript of these precious possessions. If the Sabbath were naught but a day of physical rest, its sole aim to afford the wearied body an opportunity for repose, then, indeed, the first day of the week might serve in its place. The *rest* of the Sabbath day is, however, merely a means to a higher end. The Sabbath is the pillar upon which rests our belief in one God and the brotherhood of man, with all the blessed

consequences resulting from such a doctrine. The Sabbath is our dogma, our confession of faith, declaring *אני ראשון ואני אחרון ומבלעדי אין אלהים*, "I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God," while the celebration of the first day of the week proclaims a directly opposite belief. We will not cease to hope for a better condition of affairs among the men in Israel. We believe that a crisis has been reached, not that the Sabbath is lost to us forever.

In the meantime, it is the duty of the women in Israel to stand before the breach, carefully fostering the Sabbaths and festivals, just as they wait patiently, keeping the table ever ready against the return of father and son belated on their homeward way. Give the Sabbath a friendly welcome in your pleasant homes. Set a good example to your growing sons and daughters. Leave your shopping and your business affairs to be attended to on other days of the week. Let your spotless homes in festal garb, by the air of peace and happiness pervading them, proclaim to the visitor: "This is the Sabbath day! Here the Sabbath reigns even though the clamor of every-day life resounds without these walls!" Let the Sabbath in the home show father and sons, when they return from their work-a-day occupations, that the Sabbath is neither lost nor abandoned, though they themselves are passing through the Sabbath crisis of our day.

Long ago, the women in Israel gave up their jewels and even their mirrors for the equipment of the sanctuary in the desert. Now, oh women! Save that day which is even more precious than the tabernacle of the congregation of Israel! Save it by taking it under your special protection!

Rabbi Meïr was the author of the infelicitous benediction, "Praised be thou, O Lord! who hast not made me a woman." If his spirit, sixteen hundred years after his demise, could look down from the heavenly heights, upon our time and circumstances, he would say, "Praised be thou, O Lord! who hast created women that they may arise to preserve the sanctuary of Israel in the hour of danger!"

Woman! that woman
 who is nearly
 the power of
 the world - our home
 for in a religious sense
 she is the home

MOSES AND HIS MISSION.

LEV. I : 1.

Shortly after the exodus from Egypt, Israel erected a common sanctuary, expending upon it energy and treasure in proportion to the means at its disposal. The people brought gold and silver and other costly material for the building and its ornamentation. The nobles contributed jewels of great price. Bezalel and his associates bent their strength and skill to the work. The women made perhaps the greatest sacrifice of all—they surrendered their mirrors of burnished bronze.

What did Moses contribute to the sacred cause?

In the Proverbs of Solomon, we read, "There is gold and a multitude of jewels; but a precious vessel are the lips of knowledge." This verse suggests the following to our sages: "Gold was brought by the people, and pearls the princes gave; but who brought the most precious vessel? Moses, we are told, gazed sadly upon the completed sanctuary, and said, 'Every one has contributed his share. I, alone, have come with empty hands.' God, therefore, comforted him, saying, 'Thy word is the gift most pleasing in my sight. Among all these men, thou alone wilt be called.' Therefore, the Bible says, 'The Lord *called* unto Moses, and spoke unto him.'"

The tabernacle was completed with its rich, golden ornaments. Upon the breast and shoulders of the high-

priest flashed the jewelled wealth of kingdoms. The sacrificial service was in full progress; the incense ascended from the sanctuary in fragrant clouds. The people filled the space set aside for them, feasting their eyes upon the result of their labors, and giving generous praise to all whose material aid or artistic skill had assisted in the completion of the sanctuary. But no voice had as yet come from on high to set the seal of divine approval upon the work. Finally, the call came. "He called unto Moses." From among all the people, he alone was called. For without Moses' share in the work, the tabernacle and its service, with all its pomp and show, would have been without purpose. If the spirit of Moses dwell therein, even an humble house may be a glorious sanctuary, while an Israelitish temple, to which the Law and the spirit of Moses are strangers, even though it be decked with purple and set upon beams of gold, is naught but a monument to pride and vainglory. It matters not how solemn the chant of the service, nor how much apparent devotion and exaltation mark the progress of the prayers, it is all a mere form, if the call be not heard in the sanctuary, the call unto Moses.

The references to the construction of the tabernacle and the services held in it are of importance to us in our day. It is not the width of the street, nor the imposing size and magnificence of the structure, and the elegant decoration of the interior, nor yet the melodious choir, the majestic peal of the organ, and the dignified behavior of the worshippers that can make our synagogues what they ought to be. Neither can the size and thickness of the prayer-books compass this end.

The true spirit can be measured only by the reverence paid to Moses and his Law on the lips of the teachers, and in the hearts of the attendants. Through a newly completed sanctuary must resound the call determining its worth and purpose, the Lord calling "unto Moses."

In every Israelitish house of worship there is at least one copy of the written Law of Moses, and long or short portions are recited in the course of the service. But when God "calls" for Moses and his Law, he does not want the mere sound of the word, void of all life and intelligence, but the animating thought, the living soul of the Law. The soul receives no inspiration from the hasty recital of the Torah, and that in a language unintelligible to many in the audience. If the only source of Israel's knowledge of the Law be the weekly instruction—if such it can be called—received on the Sabbath day, then, indeed, may Moses ask, in sadness: "What has been my share in the erection of the sanctuary?"

It is the duty of every Israelite to familiarize himself with the Law of Moses in word and import while he is young, nor should he cease from its study in old age. And if he that occupies the pulpit likewise considers it his duty to aid in spreading "knowledge and understanding" of the Law, then we may hope to have sympathy and intelligence accompany the reading of the Torah. The call unto Moses, which is of so great a significance in our sanctuaries, does not merely mean an intimate acquaintance with his Law; it also requires a consideration of the qualities which fitted Moses for his life-work—to be a law-giver unto Israel, and in many respects, a standard for all civilized nations.

Moses was eighty years old, and as yet there was no

Torah, although, previous to this time, the call of God had come to him in Egypt. In that day, there was no trace of the mass of learning which a theological student of our time is expected to acquire. The Bible did not exist, still less was there any thought of a Talmud. Moses had absorbed the learning of the time, and, through thought and experience, had acquired much knowledge of the world and its ways. Such was Moses as God found him—not a theologian, but a *man*, qualified to proclaim his commandments, and worthy of the task, and the “Lord called unto him.”

When God calls for Moses in the sanctuaries devoted to his service, he does not want the theologian Moses, expounding, both in his praise and in his censure, in his lamentation and in his rejoicing, a narrow Judaism; he wants the Moses pictured to us in the Bible, the man of energy, rich in knowledge of man and the world, whose mind encompasses the whole of life and understands it; who does not forget God in his attention to worldly matters, nor does he ignore the earth while reflecting upon the greatness of his Maker.

Finally, the call for Moses does not enjoin upon us merely an intimate acquaintance with the Law and the wisdom therein contained. Of equal importance is the question, “What testimony do we bear to his Law and his example in our daily lives?”

While occupying an exalted position in Egypt, Moses risked his life for the sake of his helpless brethren. Even when a fugitive, an inner voice compelled him to aid those suffering grievous wrongs to obtain justice. Advanced in years, he took upon himself the liberation and the leadership of his unhappy people. The forty

days and nights passed on the mountain-top were surely not spent in feasting. This is the lesson of this incident in the life of Moses, as narrated in the Bible; in the execution of his divine appointed task, the aged man denied himself many physical comforts, devoting himself wholly to the service of divine truth and the salvation of his people. Tireless energy was united in him with unparalleled modesty and inexhaustible patience, and therefore God called unto him.

And similarly the call resounds through our synagogues; the call for men willing and able to aid those to obtain justice that suffer wrongfully; the call for men to devote themselves to the service of the community, to advance the welfare of others in the narrow or wide spheres in which they may be called upon to labor.

OFFERING AND SACRIFICE.

"Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any one of you wish to bring an offering unto the Lord : of the cattle, either of the herds, or of the flocks, shall ye bring your offering"—LEV. 1 : 2.
אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן ל'

This passage, if translated in the order in which the words occur in Hebrew, would read : "A man that offers of you a sacrifice unto the Lord." According to the sense of the verse, it ought to read, ל' יקריב קרבן ל' "Any one of you that brings an offering unto the Lord."

Many interpretations have been put upon this text by the old Bible students, but not one of them is entirely satisfactory. In our morning's discourse, let us attempt to find a more pleasing interpretation of these verses.

In the passage, ככם, "of you," must be emphasized. If a man wishes to bring a true sacrifice to God, he must put a part of himself into the offering. A gift, whose bestowal does not demand any *self-denial* on the part of the giver, though it may be good in itself, by virtue of its application to a worthy cause, is, nevertheless, so far as the giver is concerned, not a sacrifice. Physical aid, rendered without effort, but at an opportune moment, may prove a most grateful help, a true service, but can lay no claim to the distinction of sacrifice ; it is not ככם, "of you," a part of your *ego*. So a man may bring an offering to the Temple, and think that he has brought a sacrifice. The sacrificial animal

may bleed before the altar, or lie smoking upon it; it is, nevertheless, but a gift, not a sacrifice, and, in this instance, a useless one. You must bring a part of yourself with your offering, your heart and soul must be in it, if it is to be a true sacrifice. This, alone, constituted the worth of the sacrificial service at the altar, and upon this idea, the prophets ever laid great stress. A pious heart and noble intentions must accompany the sacrifice. The offering is not an end in itself. It is not food for the gods, as the heathen believe, but the expression of a pious, god-fearing frame of mind, beneficent in its moral effect upon the giver himself.

For us, the synagogue and its service must take the place of the Temple and the sacrifice of olden times; and we, too, must heed the injunction contained in the emphatic *כָּכֶם*, "of you," if the service in the synagogue is to partake of the efficacy of a sacrifice. Participation in the public service is always beneficial in its effect upon ourselves, and is, moreover, a worthy action. If, however, we attend service only when we have nothing else wherewith to occupy our time, only when the sun shines brightly and the air is clear, and the house of worship stands at but a short distance away from our homes; if, in brief, we are willing to sacrifice neither strength nor convenience, then, in truth, our *כָּכֶם*, *mickem* is wanting. We bring our prayer-books, but not ourselves to the synagogue.

The gift of the man of little means is usually a sacrifice. A gift, however small in value, demands strict self-denial on his part. The rich man can, naturally, not be expected to dispose of his riches for benevolent purposes to his own actual impoverishment. So long,

however, as giving is a pleasure to him, requiring no self-conquest on his part, his gift, however deserving of gratitude, cannot be regarded as a sacrifice. It is not *mickem*. If, however, the man of wealth gives away more than he feels it his actual duty to give, bearing more than his share of the general burden of charity; if his heart is weary of giving and again giving; if he lacks sympathy for the applicant; if, indeed, antipathy prejudices him; if he is prompted not by his charitable impulses, but by his sense of duty, then giving is no longer a pleasure to him—even the rich man, under such circumstances, brings a sacrifice.

In actual, personal service, however, in the real *mickem*, rich and poor are alike. He that wishes to make a sacrifice pleasing in the sight of God, may not be sparing of his own efforts. Let us speak not of those that offer their fellow-man only censure and good advice instead of material aid and the helping hand, but of better men. Of these we may make two divisions. Those in the one class manifest their sympathy for suffering mankind in generous gifts, and by gladly sacrificing their money for the benefit of others; but no demand may be made upon them themselves, neither upon their time nor their energy; nor will they deprive themselves of any pleasure for the sake of their suffering fellow-men. In the other division are the real helpers in distress, the true workers in the field of humanity and religion. They grow neither tired nor impatient, but are ever ready to put their hands to the good cause, to deny themselves both rest and pleasure for the benefit of their family, of the community, of suffering mankind.

Many a father of a family is the very personification

of liberality towards his wife and children. Without a murmur, he pays his consort's bills. He employs the best teachers for his children, and considers no sum too large to be expended on procuring their happiness. But he himself must be left in peace. His wife receives no help from him; early and late, year in and year out, she must bear alone the cares of the household. There is no one with whom she may seek counsel or assistance, and the children, too, lack a guide and an educator. This is *giving* without *sacrifice*. It is not *mickem*. This same man may be a good member of congregations and societies. To their councils and meetings, he sends his delegate, the dollar, but he himself cannot be induced to come.

So there are many good and attentive children that do everything for parents and grandparents that can be done with money, but they are not self-sacrificing enough to take into consideration the wishes of their elders in the arrangement of their households, or in their mode of life; they find it impossible to leave desires ungratified for the sake of giving pleasure to others. Here, again, we have a lack of what the Bible calls *mickem*.

So with our relations to our kinsmen. We are not unwilling to render them material assistance, but we hesitate to associate with them, if they happen to occupy a lower position in the social scale. Such help is a gift, but not a sacrifice. We offer them our gold, but not ourselves.

Again: a man is a Jew, and wants to live as such, but his religion must not demand too much of him. He gladly celebrates the Holy Days if they happen to fall

upon Sundays, thus not interfering with his business pursuits. Judaism must, likewise, not ask that a curb be put upon his appetite. His fellow-citizens of other beliefs need not discover that he is a Jew, for this knowledge might work him harm. Such Judaism has some virtue in it, it is true, but it is not the virtue of sacrifice. It is not *mickem*. Such religion does not penetrate the very heart and soul of man.

Again: a certain man is religious. But religion demands a continual abasement of reason. A truly religious person must acknowledge to himself that he believes in the highest truths, even though his reason does not grasp them as easily as the rule of three; they lie beyond the horizon of his reason. This means great self-conquest for man, proud as he is of his intellectual attainments. To him whose faith is bounded by reason religion is as a gift, not a sacrifice.

On the whole, the pleasant virtues do not allow man to become degraded, nor, on the other hand, do they raise him above the level of the commonplace. By pleasant virtues, I mean such as it is agreeable to exercise, whose practice makes our paths in life smooth and easy. The stern virtues, on the other hand, exalt a human being in the sight of God and his fellow-men. The stern virtues cause the heart of man to bleed. Against their practice, prudence enters its protest. A sharp struggle within the soul is the price of their triumph.

Revenge, for instance. How sweet! The long wished for hour of vengeance has come at length! Reason says to us: "Your opponent, your enemy is at your mercy. Take from him his power. Do unto him as he did unto

you, and let him feel all the bitterness that he has made you suffer." Duty, however, calls to you: "You shall not take revenge. You must not seek to wreak vengeance upon your fellow-man." Truly, forgiveness is as difficult as revenge is pleasant; and great as is the delight of laying hands upon your enemy, and punishing him to your heart's content, so great is the self-conquest required to allow him to go on his way unharmed, and, it may be, to render him assistance. He that practises this stern virtue, doing his enemy no harm, but rather acting as a benefactor towards him, he indeed, brings a sacrifice—*nickem*, a portion of his own heart. Thus, every struggle against a passion, every self-imposed deprivation of comfort, ease, pleasure, dearest habits, favorite pursuits, or even renunciation of well-founded opinion, for the sake of maintaining harmony and concord in the home circle and abroad, is a true act of self-sacrifice, an offering of a portion of self-love.

Everything great and noble in its nature demands sacrifices. Virtue, religion, patriotism, friendship, conjugal affection, filial and parental love, affection among brethers and sisters—all require sacrifices for their full development. Their worth is great or small in proportion to the power of self-sacrifice manifested in their exercise.

How large the price paid for truth! How difficult to be faithful to its standard, and ever to acknowledge it before mankind!

In the darkness of mediæval days, our ancestors sacrificed all that is most dear to man upon earth for the sake of their faith, in defence of that which they held to be

the truth. Not individuals alone, but entire communities, from the child to the aged man, from the beggar to the man of wealth and position!

Those were times in which man sacrificed himself and all that was precious in his eyes to his God. How light a burden has Judaism grown to be in our day, and yet many murmur at its weight, and here and there it is thrown off as too oppressive to be longer borne. A heavy plank rests more securely on the shoulder than the light feather, which a breath of air may blow away. Thus it is with Judaism. The easier its profession and its practice, the more difficult appears to its bearers the task of balancing it in the strong winds of modern times.

The daily service in the Temple was begun with a prescribed sacrifice, and in the evening, it was closed with the same ceremony. At day-break, the priests were called to prepare the offering. We, too, are called upon every morning to bring our sacrifices in our homes and in our various pursuits. Man, gather up your forces for the work before you! Practise self-control, be peaceable, be benevolent! Strive to subdue indolence, desire, greed, envy, hatred, pride and arrogance, even though a piece of your heart—the corner in which these qualities reside—be sacrificed in the act. *Mickem!* Make an offering of this part of your *self* to your God.

PROVIDENCE OR CHANCE.

LEV. X.

Aaron, the honored high-priest, stood performing the duties of his exalted office on the most festive of the days celebrating the dedication of the newly-finished tabernacle. His heart was filled with emotions of solemn joy. Well might he praise that day as the proudest of his life. Probably not a few envious glances followed the hero of the day, the foremost among six hundred thousand men, moving about in his magnificent robes to perform the honored service in the sanctuary. But who can foresee the vicissitudes of a single day! The sun had risen brightly that morning for Aaron; at noon it shone above his head in majestic splendor, the evening saw it sink obscured by clouds and mist. Of his four sons, who had shared with him the honors, as the services of the day, the two older ones lay stretched before him in death, victims to their own wrong-doing.

"A fire went out from before the Lord." A similar incident, occurring in our own day, would not be reported in these words: "A fire went out from before the Lord," it would be spoken of as a *disaster*, an unfortunate *occurrence*, an *accident*.

Can we look upon the denial of the existence of a wise Providence as a mark of progress? Is it a proof of sound philosophy to say, under similar circumstances, "a

fire broke out," and not to add "from God?" Nay, such omission rather bespeaks a relapse into a state of deplorable barbarism.

History can tell us but little of the earliest stages of human civilization; let us then close its vast tomes, and allow thought to carry us back to that dim past. A picture is there unrolled to us of men destroyed by fire and water, of men strangled and slain without looking up to any power higher than themselves. Chance and the wickedness of man alone are looked upon as responsible agents. In a later stage of development, petty, envious and malicious deities and spirits were regarded as the authors of the evil that afflicted mankind, till finally, in the Scriptures, the one, omnipotent God is revealed, who holds in his hand the destinies of all his creatures. Nothing is too great nor is aught too small to escape his all-seeing eye. It is he who has counted not only the suns, but every leaf upon each tree, every mote of dust upon the globe, who not only sees into the heart of man, and understands all his joys and sorrows, his thoughts, desires and ambitions, but who knows the very entrails of the minute creatures which, even when enlarged by the microscope to the ten-thousandth diameter, become visible to human eyes as a mere dot. Thus the idea of unity was introduced into creation.

Creation is a unity, the work of one mind, and the constant aim of science is naught but to show the relation of the individual to the universe.

Is it not an inspiring thought, that we are all parts of one universe ruled by intelligence, in which the individual is neither lost nor forgotten? To take the reins of the rulership of the world from God, and place them

into the hands of blind chance, once more disintegrates the whole into its component parts, and we have again chance in the place in which the idea of God had erected a structure, harmonious in all its details. This so-called progress, which sets chance in the place of Providence, restores the condition of those times in which the fratricide asks, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The incident under discussion, in which the hand of Providence manifested itself visibly, is of a sort familiar to our own every-day experience. The two young men, Nadab and Abihu, heeded not the injunctions of their father and of their uncle, who was at the same time their superior in position and their teacher; regardless of authority and law, they played with the forbidden fire. This heedlessness was their destruction, and from the consequences of this very fault, we see thousands and tens of thousands suffering day after day. He that fails to obey his parents; that heeds not the injunctions of teachers and superiors, is sure to bring ruin upon himself, though consuming fire may not always be the destroying agent.

Is there even one among us who, casting an honest glance upon his past life, will not say, "I should be better off to-day, had I always heeded the voice of my father, my mother, my teacher?" In flaming letters we see traced in every earthly career these words: "He that uses fire like Nadab and Abihu will perish even as did Nadab and Abihu." This is a law of God, as natural and as unalterable as the change of the seasons. Yet it must be admitted, that in the course of his life, man is visited by sorrows which, in human estimation, he has not brought upon himself, and he enjoys blessings

which he does not deserve. In these crises, it is hard for a believer to maintain his position. If this event is not the work of chance, but the conscious deed of your God, then he is a ruthless God, governed by caprice. But I say that he that believes in the existence of a Supreme Being, and at the same time believes that this Being could abandon his creatures to the mercy of blind chance, is guilty of grosser blasphemy, than if he ascribes to him caprice and ruthlessness. Neither of these descriptions applies to the true Israelitish conception of God. We believe that God is neither cruel beyond comprehension, nor beyond comprehension indifferent to the weal and woe of his creatures. He is wise and good beyond comprehension. It is true, the combination of kindness and justice in divine judgments is incomprehensible to us; neither can we understand the union of free-will and predestination. It is, however, rational to assert, "The God of my belief is an incomprehensible Being," for the concept deity presupposes inscrutability. A God whose purpose we could fathom, the significance of whose actions we could grasp with our mere spark of intelligence, would be no God.

The piety that traces everything to the will of the Almighty as its cause is, however, not always the source of comfort that it proved to Aaron. To one, the recognition of God's dispensations is the cause of much self-reproach and consequent unhappiness; to another, again, it offers an opportunity for uncharitable criticism of his neighbor. The one upbraids himself, thinking, that trouble and distress, death and destruction are God's decrees, and the other judges his fellow-man in bitterness; he says to himself, "God has afflicted that man for his

misdeeds." With this thought in mind, Moses addressed to Aaron the words of consolation, "On those who are near unto me, will I be sanctified." The upright and the pious cannot be spared earthly woe and affliction; even the best among men must learn to know suffering. Not every stroke of misfortune is meant as a punishment, neither is every infliction a penalty for sin. Man honors God and sanctifies him in the measure in which he submits to God's will, holding firmly to the conviction, "God's will controls my destiny; what God does is for the best." Piety does not consist in loud wailing, much less in an open display of bitter grief, but rather in humble resignation to God's will.

"And before all the people will I be glorified." The mass of the people, incapable of independent thought, but ready to follow others in thought, speech and action, emulating your example, will honor God. And highly necessary it is that the people see before them a worthy example of willing submission.

Experience teaches that the illusion is common to all the nations of the earth, that the louder lamentation and mourning are among the people, and the more unrestrained the expression of grief, the greater their piety.

The contemporaries of Moses cut their flesh in sign of mourning, tore their hair and mutilated their bodies till the skin was dyed in blood. The expression of grief at funerals was heightened by the weeping and howling of women paid for their efforts. Moses now demanded of Aaron that by his good example he should discountenance these vicious customs. "Let not the hair of your head grow long, rend not your garments;" be not interrupted in the discharge of your duties.

Moses warned his brother against another vicious usage of the day. Just as on the one side, mistaken piety sought to aggravate the emotion of grief, so, on the other hand, the attempt was made at mourning feasts to deaden the natural feelings of sorrow by the use of intoxicating drinks. Man should, however, neither morbidly over-stimulate his natural feelings in a spirit of religious extravagance, nor frivolously seek to benumb them. Give unto nature its due, neither more nor less.

Such is the significance of the law for the sons of Aaron set down in this chapter—the law enjoining upon them abstinence from the use of intoxicating liquors.

INDIVIDUALITY.

LEV. X.

When men like Nadab and Abihu, who had already been given a share with their father in the service of the sanctuary, and had been appointed as teachers in Israel, seek to follow their own inclinations, turning aside from the course marked out for them by high authority, we must look for a more satisfactory reason for their action than the general observation that youth, by its very nature, is tempted to place itself in opposition to the views of the aged. Important principles must be at stake in this conflict between Moses and Aaron, on the one side, and Nadab and Abihu, on the other.

“Nadab and Abihu took each his censer, and they put therein fire, and put therein incense: and they brought near before the Lord a strange fire, which he had not commanded them.”

It seems probable—and the view is advanced by our sages—that it was Israel's strong individuality, so pronounced as to be stigmatized by Moses as stubbornness, that rendered it fit for its mission as the bearer and the preserver of the pure conception of God together with all the ideas inseparable from that belief, so important in their influence upon other faiths. A nation of a more pliable nature, more ready to surrender its individuality for the sake of an easier existence among the

nations, could not have undergone the dreadful persecutions, the great oppressions, and the nameless sufferings in the cause of truth endured by Israel.

The obstinate position taken in Israel on the question of personal rights, and the intense repugnance ever manifested to a surrender of any of them, indicate clearly the reason for Israel's failure to rear a permanent state. With the exception of the reigns of David and Solomon, and of a few years during the time of the Maccabees, Israel always lived in a state of dependency on other nations, or else, as we read in the Book of Judges, "Every one did what was pleasing in his own eyes," or as the people exclaimed, after the death of Solomon, when weary of the rigor of the central authority, "Let every Israelite look to his own tent!"

Now we are ready to examine our text—a manifestation of this individuality in the earliest days of our history.

Moses and Aaron had arranged a program for the dedication of the tabernacle, in which there was no mention of an offering of incense. When in accordance with the arrangements, the various sacrifices had been offered, and consumed by the fire, Nadab and Abihu seemed to think the ceremonies still incomplete; thereupon, each took his censer, laid fire upon it, and made an offering of incense—in opposition to the order of exercises planned at the appointed place in the name of God.

If in our own time, at some public ceremony, at which the exercises were proceeding with all due order and decorum, some officious person were to interfere with the order of ceremonies, surely the anger of the authorities of the day would quickly be roused. It is true, with us

an action like that of Nadab and Abihu would not be deemed worthy of the death penalty, since we have learnt to discriminate between form and spirit; but in the time of Moses, and especially in the sacrificial service, form was of great importance. In a lower stage of civilization, a nation, as even now the mass of the people, does not distinguish between the form and the matter; to the people, they are the same, standing and falling together.

One of the great ideas of Moses in regard to sacrifices was the overthrow of all altars, so that but one should remain to be devoted to the service of the Almighty; upon it sacrifices were to be brought, under the supervision of the high-priest, according to a prescribed plan, no option being allowed in the matter. Thus alone could backsliding into idolatry be combated. The myriads of Israel's followers were to serve God according to set ceremonies, and not as was pleasing in their own sight. On the very first day on which this law was to go into operation, opposition reared its head in the camp. Nadab and Abihu wished to carry out their own ideas; nor did the struggle end with their death; it was prolonged throughout a thousand years. Again and again do we find in the historical books of the Bible the complaint, "The people continued to sacrifice upon their private altars, and there to offer incense." And if, after long years of idolatry, a pious king succeeded in bringing about a revival of better things, still we constantly hear the same refrain, "But the altars were still without number; the people continued to sacrifice upon their high places." In short, the people would not be deprived of their individuality; they

were unwilling to submit to a common will and a common form.

This characteristic explains much in the history of Israel in ancient times, as at a later period and in our own days. At every page of its marvellous story, Judaism seems on the verge of disintegration. Not only the limbs of Israel's *body* lie scattered over the world; in spiritual matters, there is likewise no unity, no community of action, in truth, nothing but opposition and divergence. Again and again may it be said, "Each one takes his own censer, and puts thereon incense;" and worst of all, he also "lays a fire thereupon!" It has been said of the Bible that its words are capable of forty-nine interpretations. There is no other religious community on the face of the earth so entirely without central authority; the members think and act as they please, and yet follow a common path in spite of all divergence. The one community looks up to a Pope, a Delai Lama, or a Sheik ul Islam, as an authority; others again boast a consistory or a synod. But we have no institution corresponding to any of these. Each one takes his own censer. Rabbinical conventions in the old world, and Boards of Delegates in the new have sought to bring about unity of action, but their voices, too, die away ineffectual. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations has a like end in view, but as soon as it will require obedience of individuals and congregations, it is certain that the demand will meet with protest or silent disregard.

The Shulchan Arukh, it is true, was an acknowledged authority, to a certain degree extending its influence even to our own day; still its power was not so great as

is generally believed. Strict as this code is, as a whole, it must still be said that many a one came with his censor, and laid fire upon it, "a strange fire which God had not commanded him." The cause of these phenomena in Jewish life must, indeed, be regarded as a fact; but the further cultivation of the national quality which they indicate, is not to be recommended. Many great afflictions are, in the end, recognized as beneficent in effect; even death is no exception to the rule; still it would not occur to us, on that account, to foster and nurse evil in the world. So this strongly marked individuality of Israel is an evil in its one-sided development. To it we must oppose, as a counterpoise, a strenuous effort to maintain a connection with the body of Israel, even if in pursuance of this aim, it becomes necessary to give up much that is dear to us; much that appears to us better than that which meets with the approval of the majority.

FORGETTING AND NOT LEARNING.

"After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye have dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan whither I am bringing you, shall ye not do; and in their customs, shall ye not walk.

"My ordinances shall ye do, and my statutes shall ye keep, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God.

"And ye shall keep my statutes, and my ordinances, which if a man do he shall live in them: I am the Lord.

* * * * *

"For all these abominations have the men of the land done, who were before you, and the land hath become defiled."—LEV. XVIII: 3-5, 27.

With these injunctions a heavy task was laid on our ancestors. They were ordered to forget what they had learnt in Egypt, and to learn nothing in that most efficient school in which many receive their entire education—the school of life, in which we are taught by association and example. They were to ignore completely the prevailing institutions and usages of the two most cultured states of the time, of Egypt and of Canaan, the neighbor of wealthy and cultured Phœnicia. They were to rear a new order of things in state and society, build according to a new law, making no use of old material or rules. The slow progress of the new idea in Israel, and the many backslidings of the people into their old faults are in nowise remarkable, for these faults were merely the difficulty of forgetting the past, and the inability to

resist the example of the nations among which the Israelites dwelt.

The law of Moses declared: "There is but one God!" Egypt and Canaan contradicted this statement; every hill and grove adorned with the image of a god; every monument erected by pagan hands; every inscription, wherever such existed, contradicted it. King and people, the learned priest and the ignorant shepherd alike repudiated this truth. As with one voice, they exclaimed: "There is but one God! That is not true! It is not alone an untruth, but an heretical, dreadful thought, a grievous offence against the gods, a profanity which the gods will not fail to punish." Moses taught an ideal faith; his doctrine was a voice from heaven, totally at variance with the earth and its inhabitants.

"Love thy neighbor as thyself." Another strange doctrine unheard of either in Egypt or in the land of Canaan! "As one born in the land among you, shall be unto you the stranger that sojourns with you." Here we have a direct blow at an institution common to all ancient communities, both great and small; among them all, the stranger was mistrusted and hated, if, indeed, death was not his portion.

"Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," that is the declaration of the equality of the whole people before God and the Law. In order to make this Law a part of its very life, Israel had to forget that in Egypt, slavery, inequality before the law, the caste system, were equivalent to wisdom, and that from time immemorial, they had been the pillars of the social order. Above all these laws, however, stood the command enjoining strict morality, purity of life in the rela-

tions of the sexes, and a chastity unknown to Egypt and Canaan alike. As our text, we read only the introductory words of the chapter recited this morning. The whole chapter can be read at our public services only because we read it in the Hebrew language. Children and other weaklings cannot grasp the meaning of the section, and even to those that understand them, these things are less offensive when expressed in the Hebrew tongue than in the speech of our daily intercourse. That which in our day cannot, without outraging propriety and decency, be read aloud, even as a prohibition, was a common usage among the Egyptians and the Canaanites, and none thought of it as sinful. It was entirely in accord with the law and custom of the time. We may, then, imagine how difficult of execution was the behest to forget the sensual delights and the license of Egypt and Canaan, and to cultivate strict morality and chastity, in the midst of a population among whom debauchery formed a part even of divine worship.

Thirty-five hundred years ago, the Egyptians and the Phœnicians, ranking second only to the former, were the most cultured nations of the earth. Israel first lived in Egypt, and later in its career, was the neighbor of the Phœnicians. Suddenly Moses appears, standing alone in his ideas and convictions, and says to his people, Israel, "Forget Egypt, neither learn aught from the Phœnicians. Through me, God sends unto you a new Law; it does not teach you how to build houses, or dig canals, or guide vessels, or carry on your trades and occupations; neither will it teach you how to inscribe your thoughts upon wood and stone to preserve them for future generations, nor how to manipulate numbers, how

to measure the surface of the earth, how to observe the movements of the sun and the stars. All these things it is well not to *forget*, these it is well to *learn*. No land could teach these arts better than Egypt and Phœnicia." Moses confined his teachings to religion and morality. His object it was to give to Israel a new doctrine of faith and humanity, by the application of which a new life was to begin for the nation. Had Moses brought his divine truths, his teachings, and his laws of universal love and benevolence from Egypt, as is boldly asserted by many a critic desirous of belittling mankind's debt to our religion, how could he have laid upon his contemporaries the prohibitory command, "Ye shall *not* do as the Egyptians do; ye shall *not* follow in their paths?"

Although it is highly displeasing to many a well-meaning but superficial critic that this chapter forms a part of the Bible, it is nevertheless one of the most valuable of its sections, for the prohibitions enjoined by Moses testify to the moral condition of the most cultured people of the time.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might." The gods, as pictured in the imaginations of the Egyptians and Canaanites, or as represented in visible form, or by them in the shapes of living beasts, were not beings to be loved; they rather inspired their adorers with terror and repulsion.

The highest ideal towards which our relation to our fellow-men should tend, is expressed in the maxim: "Love thy neighbor as thyself." The generic idea of *man*, a human being, the citizen of the world, was known neither to the Egyptians nor to the Canaanites.

When Pharaoh said to Moses, "I know not Adonai," he might have added, "The idea of *man* is utterly strange to me; I know only Egyptians and barbarians." And finally, the most elevated conception of man's duty toward himself is expressed in our text: **וְיָחִי בָהֶם**—if a man do my statutes and ordinances, "he shall live by them," to which our sages add, in explanation, **וְלֹא שִׁמָּת בָּהֶם**, "not die by them." The Israelite ought to regard life, its preservation, maintenance and enjoyment as a duty, and not leave it entirely to nature's control. This certainly required the Israelites to forget Egypt, and to refrain from adopting the customs of Canaan; for in those countries the underlying thought of religion was worship of the gods, not the care bestowed by the gods upon man, while the religion of Israel sought the happiness of mankind. "Not for my sake do I demand obedience," says the Lord, "not for mine own honor and glory, have I given laws and commandments unto you, that you should live according to them, but for your sake, that you may live and be happy."

וְיָחִי בָהֶם, "he shall live by them." Heathenism does not recognize that man has duties toward himself. What matters it to the gods that man does violence to his person, or injures his health, that he scourges himself, and denies himself the pleasures of life, if only the honor and the offerings due to them from mortals receive proper attention? The highest honor that could be paid to the gods, the offering most pleasing in their sight was a man's sacrifice of his own person upon the altar. Most grateful to them was the incense of human flesh arising from the earth.

In the Mosaic code, self-preservation is for the first time considered a religious duty.

On the one hand, to forget, and on the other, not to imitate have ever been, and still continue, Israel's duty. It is true, the land from which many of us came was no Egypt, neither do we dwell in Canaan. In both countries, we did and do learn much for which we ought to be truly grateful, not alone in trades, in science, in art, and in all other knowledge useful to us in our civic life, but in morality as well. The people among whom we dwell set us a good and worthy example. For, do they not use the same source from which we draw inspiration and knowledge—the Holy Scriptures? But in essential matters of faith and in all that touches closely our worship of God, we must follow the path especially marked out for us by the divine word, learning and adopting nothing from our former fellow-citizens, nor from those among whom our lot is now cast. In matters of morality as well, many an injunction has been handed down to us from the old, severe times which it would be well not to exchange for the usages and ideas of other nations; among such behests, may be included those contained in the chapter read to-day, offensive to the ear, but valuable to the heart. We have reference to the sanctity of marriage in the Israelitish community. The Bible knows no false modesty. In its pages are found in abundance words that we hesitate to pronounce, and on the other hand, the Holy Canon contains a song in honor of pure love; but no thought endangering the sanctity of the marriage relation, treating it in a frivolous light for the amusement of the public, no sentiment making fidelity ridiculous and glorifying breach of faith

is to be found in its books. Holy family life! Foundation of the structure of morality! Remain with us in thy ancient strength. Israel! Exchange not the precious heir-loom of chastity in the marriage bond and purity in family relations for the glittering toys of frivolity common in the life about you!

We have still another precious inheritance from the olden days, the virtue of moderation in the use of intoxicating liquors. We rarely find an Israelite a member of a temperance society, for Israel's religion says to him *וְחַי בָּהֶם*, "You shall *live*, and enjoy yourself, *וְלֹא שִׁמַּח בָּהֶם*, but you shall not destroy in yourself the capacity for enjoyment." Nor is an Israelite often found among drunkards. Here again the warning advice of Moses is in place: "Do not act according to the usages of the land that you have left, nor of that in which you dwell!"

We have received many benefits at the hands of our fellow-citizens, both here and abroad; let us strive to make some return for these gifts by setting them a good example in our own lives.

EQUALITY.

"Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy."—LEV. XIX : 2.

We have here no moral maxim, whose influence upon mind and heart can be but a variable quantity, but a law, a fundamental law upon which rises the very structure of the Mosaic state. The meaning of this law is more clearly indicated in the verse of the Bible which reads: "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"—I declare you all equal before God and the Law in dignity, in rights and in duties.

In Egypt, the home of Moses, the model state of antiquity, the doctrine of a holy *nation* and of a kingdom in which every subject possessed equal privileges with the priestly caste, would have been looked upon as revolutionary, a transgression against the divine and earthly order of the universe. The promulgator of such a doctrine, unless spared on the plea of insanity, would have met with a martyr's fate. Differences in rank, belief and race lay at the foundation of state and society in Egypt, as in all ancient, mediæval and even modern civilizations, the republics of the Middle Ages forming no exception to this rule. There had been holy men before this time, but no one had ever conceived the idea of a holy *nation*. The ancient world was familiar also with the idea of a *priest-nation*, *i. e.*, a nation controlled, in body and soul, by the priesthood. The Bible tells us

that the meanest Egyptian considered it beneath him to sit down to a meal with a shepherd. In India, the representative of a civilization even older than that of Egypt, one hundred Pariahs were not considered equal in worth to one Brahmin. A Brahmin would die of thirst rather than refresh himself at a well from which a Pariah had drawn water.

Such was the condition of the world through which resounded the proclamation of Moses: "Ye shall all form a holy nation; each one of you is of priestly worth!"

Final A legend current among our sages audaciously says that God, too, binds phylacteries upon his brow, and that, as in the phylacteries of Israel lies the confession of the unity of God, so the Lord's phylacteries declare the unity of Israel as a single, harmonious community: "Where is there another people like thy people Israel, founded on unity?" For man's notions about divine rule exercise a determining influence upon the institutions of government made by man, and through them, upon the weal and woe of mankind. The heathen conception of heaven lacked the element of unity as well as of equality. Their gods and spirits were separated into grades and classes. How could the thought of human equality exist side by side with this conception of heavenly institutions? Not until the spread of the belief in *one* God, the promulgation of the doctrine of the creation of *one* human pair, and of man's creation in the image of God as narrated in the Bible, could the thought of the equality of all men inform law. The man that made all Israel kneel before one God could also call to it with the voice of authority, "Ye shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation!" or as set forth in our

text, "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy."

When paganism clothed itself in the garb of Christianity, many gods were deposed from their high places in heaven, but this change did not bring with it the establishment of the idea of divine unity. In consequence, throughout seventeen hundred years, the Church tolerated and even approved the institution of rank in affairs of the state and of society; indeed, the Church herself had serfs and slaves in her possession. The division of believers into priesthood and laity exists even to-day; the ban of the Church would follow a contradiction of this dogma, and if temporal power were to lend its aid, the daring rebel would atone for his heresy upon the funeral pyre. In the highly cultured states of the old world, the pride and splendor of the nobility is not yet a thing of the past.

The desert was the scene of the promulgation of the new doctrine, the equality of all men in the sight of God. There, alone, could Moses find neutral ground, soil uncorrupted by the vicious husbandry of violence and injustice. The Puritans, too, were compelled to flee from the restraints of tradition, an antiquated doctrine of kingly authority, and the hopeless view of heaven and earth current in the old world; they, too, sought virgin soil, and came to these bleak shores, still covered with the primeval forest, that they might prepare the ground for the law of reason, and plan a life in accordance with the doctrine of the equality of all men.

The law and the doctrine of universal equality have become so thoroughly a part of our very flesh and blood that a word on the subject may appear super-

fluous, how much more making the idea the theme of a discourse in a house of worship. Nevertheless, it is well for us to be reminded occasionally that the acquisition is, in truth, a very recent one. For more than three thousand years, the law of equality was like a grain of wheat lying in the hand of a mummy. The law as it stood in the Bible was a beautiful flower in the garden of morality. In the economy of human affairs, in the fields of practical legislation and administration, it was trampled upon, and violently uprooted, wherever it ventured to sprout upon the surface of society. Wonderful to relate! Three thousand years after the promulgation of the doctrine, six thousand miles distant from Mount Sinai, far over the sea known at that time as the ים הנדול and beyond a still greater ים הנדול, entirely unknown to the ancients, in a quarter of the globe whose existence was not suspected in that distant day—there the Mosaic law, like the staff of Aaron, sprouted, blossomed and bore fruit in one moment! The plant that had been looked upon as poisonous in the old world, or at the least, detested by the ruling powers as a rank weed, now became a very tree of life for mankind. And yet only a decade ago, how much blood was shed in this very land, the traditional home of liberty, ere the complete triumph of this glorious principle could be achieved!

What is Israel's share in this achievement? There was no Jew among the Puritans that came to this country in the *Mayflower*, and planted the seed that was to bear good fruit for the future Republic. None of our fellow-believers participated in the struggles of the colonies with the Parliament of the mother-country. The name

great
sea

of an Israelite is not found among the signers of the Declaration of Independence, nor among the framers of the Constitution. Our share in the great work of the Republic is our Torah. The corner-stone of our national constitution—the equality of all men—was quarried at Mount Sinai. The Puritans, those men of irresistible strength and iron will, were the builders of the Republic. In them Saxon strength and Biblical spirit were united. They thought in the spirit of the Old Testament; they spoke in the language of the Bible; they preached in the style of the prophets; they sang in the words of our psalmists. As they also preferred to take their names from the Old Testament, only the sound of the Hebrew language was wanting in their camp for us to imagine ourselves in the midst of Davids, Joabs, Gideons and other Old Testament heroes.

Israelites! This is our part in the structure of a new world—our Torah! There is but one God in Heaven and one mankind on earth. Yet in our day, none know and study the Torah less than we Israelites. To the Spaniards belonged the gold and silver mines of the new world; but it was the Hollanders and the Englishmen that grew rich. The Spanish owners became impoverished in their indolence. We possess the gold mine of religion, but in religious learning we grow ever poorer; our Christian brethren enrich themselves with our treasures.

Who can count the millions of dollars expended by Christian piety and liberality upon the translation of the Bible into one hundred and fifty languages, that it may be spread over the entire earth, and be placed in every lonely cabin? In the cars, in steamboats, in

hotels, the Bible lies ready at hand, placed there by some pious hand ; and it is not merely read, it is *studied* by Christian scholars and by the common people, by priest and layman alike. And now behold the contrast—the Holy Scriptures and the Israelites! The picture is a sad one, even from a secular point of view, for any one that makes the slightest pretension to culture ought not to be a stranger to this book of the world's literature. Will there soon be a change for the better? May God grant that Israel remain his holy nation and a kingdom of priests worthy of the name!

When we assemble in thy name, O God! to open the book of thy Law, we express our thanks to thee that thou hast selected us from among all nations to receive thy Law—to receive, but not to forget it; not, like slothful servants, to lay the burden upon the shoulders of others, but to preserve it, to study it and to spread abroad its blessed truths. We thank thee in words, may we confirm our gratitude in deeds! May thy holy law be ever on our lips and in our hearts! May the words of the prophet find realization in us: "My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy children, nor out of the mouth of thy children's children, from henceforth and forever!"

THE MEANING OF THE WORD "HOLY."

"Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy."—LEV. XIX: 2.

An action worthy of being called holy must be entirely free from selfish motives. If we shun sin because of our fear of earthly or eternal punishment; if we do good in the hope of reward, though this anticipated reward be but praise and gratitude and other acknowledgment, the action is, indeed, praiseworthy. Our sages say, "Whoever says, 'These alms I give that my child may live, or in order to secure for myself life eternal,' may be called truly pious." Yes, he is a pious man, for God is in his thoughts, and to him he looks for help. However, we cannot call him a *holy* man, for his motive is self-interest, even though of a most refined character. "Ye shall be holy." With no thought of selfish gain, sanctify your lives, devoting yourselves to good and avoiding evil.

A man may, however, do good and noble deeds with aims and spirit alike disinterested, and still not have the slightest claim to holiness, for in order to deserve the attribute holy, sentiment and act must be inspired by thoughts of God and his holy will. "For I the Lord your God am holy"—let this be the reason for your holiness. In this chapter, so rich in maxims concerning that which is good and just, every sentence is followed by the

warning, "I am the Lord your God." Be this the *motive* of your actions. No one speaks of holy Socrates. In our days, too, there are many good and noble men, who have no claim to holiness, still less do they lay any pretensions to such praise, for God is not in their thoughts, probably they do not even believe in him, and hence the divine idea can have no influence upon their feelings and actions. Through Moses, God proclaims to Israel: "Ye shall be holy! It is God's will that, without a thought of self, you devote yourselves to all that is pure and elevated, and let your inspiration be this thought, 'God is holy!'"

Little justification as there is for calling that man holy whose actions, though disinterested, good and noble, are uninspired by any thought of God, still less is it proper to ascribe this quality of holiness to one who acts always in the name of God, and who lives and dies in a firm belief in him, but whose sentiments and actions cannot bear the searching light of reason and morality. In the name of God, Torquemada and Arbues, Philip the Second, Ferdinand and Isabella wrought deeds, the very thought of which makes us shudder with horror. Loyola, too, believed that he was truly serving God, and all these the Head of the Church pronounced holy. Granting that these men robbed, persecuted and tortured their fellow-men to death in the firm belief that their actions were pleasing in the sight of God; granting that avarice did not play a part in urging them on to action, nevertheless, we cannot admit that they could lay claim to holiness, since their doctrine, sentiments and deeds were in direct opposition to the dictates of reason and morality. Korach, too, laid claim to holiness. He said,

"The whole of the congregation are all of them holy, and the Lord is among them," but his *deeds* were base, prompted by vain ambition. Acting in the name of God and in a belief in God may make a man pious, but not holy. Holiness is greater than piety. Holiness includes piety, but piety may exist apart from holiness. There are, therefore, more pious men than saints in the world. A fanatic may be pious, and yet displeasing both to God and to man. Piety is of the heart, but holiness presses into service heart, hand and spirit. "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." God is not called holy because of a pious belief in himself, but because he is goodness, justice and wisdom; because he dwells in our thoughts far removed from all that is earthly, all that is sensual. "Ye shall be holy" means, "I am not satisfied with piety that simply pays its addresses to me; I want not servants that think to gain my favor by praise and prayer."

Finally, holiness must be paramount and constant, suffering neither fluctuation nor change.

In every man's life there are moments of good inspiration, when noble impulses are stirred within him. So too, there are but few human beings, over whom there steals not, now and again, a presentiment or a consciousness of the existence of a divine, omnipotent Power, of an eternal life in which the soul will continue its existence. To some, such feelings, such moments may be familiar companions; to others, but fleeting and infrequent visitors, perhaps gaining entrance to their souls on the annually recurring Day of Atonement, or when affliction and death are visited upon them. Such moments and thoughts are like flashes of lightning, illuminating

the heaven of night; but the light is unreliable. It does not always lighten, when one is sorely in need of light. So, too, the light of piety is often extinguished, even in the pious man, at the very moment when he most feels the want of it. But, "Ye shall be holy" means, "The fear of the Lord, a good heart and a willing hand must become second nature to you. In temptation and in the hour of weakness, they must not waver. Your fear of God and your moral instinct dare not be diseased, at times exciting your blood to fever heat; at others, chilling you to the heart."

After the principle of holiness has been laid down for us in the words of our text, the rest of the chapter, read to-day, gives the details for putting it into practice.

"Ye shall fear, every man, his mother and his father." Fear of one's father, *i. e.*, obedience to parents, lies at the foundation of education in holiness. Let no one speak of an education as good, in which childlike obedience is wanting. Opinions may differ as to the mode of compassing this end. Not the *method*, but the *result*, is important. "Ye shall be holy!" How beautiful are these words! Moses, however, was not a man of fine phrases, but of deep and sound sense. He says to Israel, "You are destined to become a holy nation, to devote yourself entirely to all that is divine, good and noble. Towards this end must tend the education given you by your father and mother. Holy men are not *born*. In obedience to one's father and mother one learns obedience to duty.

"Ye shall fear, every man, his mother and his father, and my Sabbaths shall ye keep." If your children are to obey you, fathers and mothers, *you* must keep my Sabbaths. Yet important as the observance of the Sabbath

is, it is but one duty, selected as an example out of many duties, and saying to us, "If the education of your children is to be successful, you must guide them by your good example; if your children are to obey you, *you* must be obedient to God." It is true that, in the work of education, the observance of the Sabbath is a most important factor, and hence especially fitted to be chosen as an example. "My sanctuary shall ye reverence" is a further means to holiness. In using these words, Moses had in mind the sanctuary of his time, though the structure was but a simple tent and not a magnificent temple. The tabernacle and later the two Temples were replaced by synagogues and schools as seats of education in holiness. Reverence the holy purposes that the house serves, be the structure but one of boards! Divine service, the school, education in the home with the observance of the Sabbath as an aid, are the means of sanctifying Israel. When we enter the house of the Lord let us heed the call, "Reverence for my sanctuaries!" Assemble here in an elevated, an earnest mood; leave frivolous thoughts and ungodly meditations without these walls. Let devotion hold your souls in thrall! Upon joining our family circles, let us attend to the inward voice saying, "Render obedience to your parents!" When we pursue our callings, in our business intercourse, let us heed the warning, "Be upright in your dealings with your neighbor." And in all conditions and vicissitudes of life, may sympathy with our fellow-man be our constant companion! Love your neighbor in a spirit of disinterestedness, of unselfishness, of holiness.

"Ye shall be holy!" Be not only synagogue and prayer-book saints, but be holy in thought and action, holding aloof from everything base and impure.

SELF-RESPECT.

LEV. XIX : 18.

"Love thy neighbor as thyself!" "This law," says Christianity, "I gave unto the world," and thereupon proceeds to call itself, to the exclusion of all others, the religion of love. The Jewish religion is said by it to be narrow in its sympathies, and the God of Israel is called a God of wrath. It is impossible to understand how the authorship of the doctrine of humanity can be denied to Judaism, for the tenet is taught here in the Pentateuch with all possible clearness and force. "That may be true," they say to us, "but you use the word רֵעֶךָ 'thy neighbor,' which means belonging to your own people. Non-Israelites are excluded from this circle, while our religion teaches an unrestricted and universal love of mankind." This objection, too, is entirely without foundation. In the verses that follow, Moses says: "If a stranger sojourn with you in your land, ye shall not vex him. As one born in the land among you, shall be unto you the stranger that sojourneth with you, and thou shalt love him as thyself."

The moving force in this dispute between the two sets of adherents is the vain ambition of each to make the greater *boast* of the faith professed by each. In theory, this law is highly prized, both in churches and in synagogues; it is found in all catechisms. But in practice,

it is equally neglected by both bodies of men. This contest between the religions for the honor of being the true mother of the idea of humanity reminds us of the dispute of the two mothers before the judgment seat of Solomon, concerning the ownership of the living child and the dead one. In that altercation the living child nearly lost its life. At times, both religions have acted like unnatural mothers towards this offspring of heaven. It is but a poor consolation for us that rivers of blood, mountains of human bodies, seas of tears testify against the younger mother, while the older one, the Synagogue, for seventeen hundred years, like the lamb in the fable, did not muddy the stream for the wolves, and stands before the world clean of hand. The theory is good, even of heavenly excellence. It is, indeed, but too good for this world. Earth would turn into a heaven for its inhabitants, if the doctrine of humanity were in practice applied with the zeal with which it is advocated as a theory. There is probably no one among us so little versed in knowledge of himself as to boast, "I, for my part, love my neighbor as myself." There has been no human being on the face of the earth, from Adam's day down to our own, who has not loved himself more than his fellow-man. Taken in its strict sense, the law is against human nature. It was set up by Moses as an ideal to be approached more and more nearly, but without any prospect of its complete realization. In the development of the religion of Israel, as shown in the religious writings that followed the books of Moses, there is no reference to the law of humanity promulgated in the Torah. Not until twelve hundred years after the time of Moses do we hear the famous Golden

Rule of Hillel. This law, however, is not "Love* thy neighbor as thyself," but "Do not unto others what you would not have others do unto you." In idea, this is very far removed from love, but as a duty, it lies within the range of man's powers. Synagogues and churches are not wanting in men and women obeying this Golden Rule in their lives, and even going far beyond it in their *works* of love.

The law of love of our fellow-man is to be our ideal; its meaning, therefore, deserves a somewhat closer investigation. We translate the word *ואהבת* in our text as "thou shalt love." Love, however, is stubborn, and will not be made a matter of duty. Sympathy comes and goes, and gives no reason for its erratic course. As we noticed earlier in the discussion, the demand for love for our fellow-man is against human nature, and is not man's nature also the work of God? But *ואהבת* may also mean, be charitable, be benignant. This demand is not unreasonable. Man can comply with it, if such be his will. Rejoice in your neighbor's prosperity; judge him in the best possible light; give him all due honor, and in your intercourse with him, make all allowances for his deficiencies. Sympathize with him in his sorrow, pity him in his distress, even if you are unable or unwilling to aid him in deed. Such is the construction that our sages put upon the verse, "Be humane," they say, "even in the manner of executing sentence of death upon a criminal, for 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'" To ask love for a criminal would be demand-

* *ואהבת* "Thou shalt love" is here followed by the dative case. The verse may, therefore, be translated, "Love for thy neighbor," etc. Hillel evidently thus translated the verse, for his Golden Rule is merely the negative of this injunction.—[Tr.]

ing too much, but one may be kindly disposed even towards those going to the scaffold.

The words "as thyself" demand a somewhat more thorough discussion. These words seem to make the doctrine still unsafer as a guide in life. In too many instances, our neighbor would be but hardly used, were we to love him as ourselves, act towards him as towards ourselves. Let us examine our lives with strictly impartial scrutiny, with vision unobscured by fatuous self-love. Who has wrought us more harm, has made life harder for us to bear, has done more to embitter our joys, than we ourselves? And we consider ourselves as belonging to the better classes! How is it, then, with the thousands lying in prison; with those wandering aimlessly about the streets; with the uncounted hosts of thieves and cheats, who bring upon themselves want and distress, amid which they perish, ending their lives in poor-houses, or it may be by their own hands? All these men loved themselves, but we should scarcely feel grateful were they to show us in our intercourse with them such love as they have shown towards themselves.

Therefore, *let man first learn to love himself wisely*; that is the higher duty. A man must be of worth to himself, before he can be of worth to his neighbor. Beneficent and enduring love is founded upon respect. If we advance "Love thyself," as the higher principle, it is in the sense, "Man respect thyself." Far be it from the spirit of religion to demand love for yourself, in your wild, brutish inclinations, your boundless selfishness. To love one's self wisely and in a god-pleasing manner, means to keep far from one's self all manner of impurity, for every sin is an act of unkindness toward one's self. To

love one's self means to do good to others, for your reward is great in your own heart and in the hearts of those about you. Your friends will be double the number of those befriended by you. To love one's self means to enjoy God's gifts, but only in such a way as not to lose one's self respect. Be pure, be honest, be upright, be true, kind and useful, be grateful to God and man, be courteous and sociable; thus, your love for yourself will rest upon respect; you will be a friend to yourself, and your friendship and your love may then possess some value for your neighbor!

The principle of love of self is thus developed before the idea of love of one's fellow-man, and it likewise takes precedence in its mention in the Bible. Man, we are told, is created in the image of God, which means, "Man, do not hold too mean an opinion of yourself, as if created for no other purpose than to eat, drink and sleep; to be born and to die like the beast. You are destined for higher things; you have free-will; you can do good and evil to others. You have an immortal soul extending beyond this earthly life; you have intelligence. Like God, the soul is invisible, but its being is felt, just as the being of the Almighty and his omnipotence and his wisdom are perceptible in his works. Upon your countenance, the Lord has breathed the living soul."* Both mind and heart speak in the face of man. The face is the mirror of our thoughts and emotions. In it, we may read acumen and stupidity, benevolence and malice, deep earnestness and unbounded covetousness, fidelity and

* Luther, in his "Table Talk," translates this passage in the Bible thus: "He blew *upon* his countenance a living spirit." This rendition was approved by Herder.

deceit, wrath and equanimity, love and hate, despair and resignation, cunning and simplicity, pride and humility, and even more than all this may a watchful observer note in the face of man! Therefore, man, hold not too low an opinion of yourself! Pay honor and respect to your own soul. Even your fellow-man may read your nature in your face, and he will regard you with respect or contempt, according to his decision; how much better must your soul be known to your Creator! If, when you look into your mirror, you see unamiability stamped on your countenance, you ought to feel ashamed even in your own eyes. You will thus learn to love yourself *wisely*, to grant yourself every pleasure that does not make you lose the respect of good men and of yourself. And thus, seeing it to be rooted in yourself, a part of your very being, remember the law of humanity, the subject of contention between Christianity and Judaism. In the strife, let us not allow this heavenly child to perish; let both rather cherish it with tender care.

SUCCESS AND FAILURE.

LEV. XXII: 27.

Success is the all powerful argument, deciding beyond appeal the question of merit. Reason, morality, the warning voice of history, are all mute before the spectacle of obvious triumph.

The world does not inquire whence came the gold. It matters not whether it be of low and sordid origin, or the reward of honorable service; whether it shine on the breast of the hero, a token of self-sacrificing courage, or gleam in the hand of the spy, a reward for treason. Gold is gold. So with success. Success is proof of right-thinking, of cleverness, of wisdom and of justice. Success is success. The path on which the goal of victory was attained is of no moment. As soon, however, as fortune deserts a man, he loses, in a moment, not only the results of his labor, but the good opinion formerly held by his fellow-men of his endowments of heart and mind. Such is the fate of human beings, and of ideas, currents of thought, and fashions as well. They rule, their triumph is manifest, and hence they are considered beautiful, good, true and right, until their kingdom is taken from them; but when that time comes, they are no longer conceded the slightest merit.

Our attention is directed to this subject to-day by a commentary of the Midrash on the morning's portion.

We read in Ecclesiastes, *האלהים יבקש את-נרדף*, "God is on the side of the persecuted;" whereupon the Midrash remarks, "God espouses the cause of the down-trodden against the oppressor. Cain was the oppressor of his brother Abel, and the Lord turned away from the former. So with Noah and his contemporaries. God chose Noah from all the men of his time. Abraham and Nimrod, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers, Moses and Pharaoh, David and Saul, Israel among the nations of the earth—in each instance, God is found on the side of the oppressed. So with the sacrificial animals; the ox is hunted down by the lion, the goat by the leopard, the wolf chases the lamb. None of these pursuers is deemed worthy of being sacrificed; only the pursued and long-suffering animals may be led to the altar. Therefore, we read, 'When a *bullock*, or a *sheep*, or a *goat*, is brought forth.' " (Lev. XXII : 27.)

In his faith and in his practice, Noah stood alone, in opposition to all the men of his time. Such was the relation of Abraham and of Moses to their respective contemporaries, and such was the position of Israel and its faith in all lands and times. Every epoch furnishes examples of men of intellectual strength and of moral power, holding an isolated position in thought, feeling and tastes.

The masses do not regard with indifference the voluntary spiritual separation and independent position of such individuals; no, they harass and persecute the men and women that dare hold different opinions and beliefs from those current with their contemporaries. The non-conformists are jeered and vexed in a thousand ways, and abused until their discomfiture seems complete.

"God sides with the oppressed." Many a man, occupying a solitary position in his generation, and many an idea struggling against the current of the time, are on the side of right and truth, while aberrations of feeling, taste and thought may make up the sum of the spiritual life of entire epochs. Noah, holding himself aloof from the rudeness about him, suffering violence but doing none, avoiding wickedness in the midst of a sinful world, must have seemed a fool in the eyes of his contemporaries. From a human point of view, success was not on his side. Abraham's new faith, as the legend tells us, brought him mortal danger. His hours of leisure were filled with meditations, not conducive to material welfare. He remained true to a God, who led him from one temptation into another. His new moral code set certain bounds to his earthly pleasures. All this must have made his life appear a failure to the men of his time; nor could they think his idea the correct one, nor regard Abraham himself as a wise and far-seeing man. Joseph's peculiar way of thinking made him appear an idle dreamer to his brothers. For eighty years it was Moses' fate to be regarded as a foolish man, who had interfered in a quarrel that did not concern him in the least, and, in consequence of which, he had to live as a stranger in a strange land.

And how low was the opinion held of Israel and its faith in the times and on the scenes of its oppression! Verily, throughout centuries, Israel and its faith seemed anything but triumphant. But God is with the oppressed. God looks not upon success, but upon the spiritual attitude. If the *principle* be good, though it

lack the support of the multitude, God will be with it and its upholders.

The poet says: "Right is with the living," or as Ecclesiastes expresses it, "A living dog fareth better than a dead lion." Hence, every period of time is looked upon as the best, by those living in it; ours is no exception to the rule. "The nineteenth century!" With this exclamation, all possible praise and approval are heaped upon its institutions and the opinions of the multitude; for the century is alive, life is success, and success means everything that is good and right. The ancient times are dead and gone, and, therefore, they are dismal failures. Others, again, hold that the olden times achieved more than the new in faith and morality, in domestic and social life. They think that a dead lion is *better* than a living dog. But the important point is that whether the oppressor takes a stand on the side of the old or of the new, God is not with the oppressor. Success is of no avail as an argument in the sight of God. If justice and right be on their side, God takes part with the minority against the majority, with the weak against the strong, with the living against the dead.

Let us, too, not allow our judgment to be biased by success or failure. When we form our opinion of a man, let us look not upon the fruits of his life, but upon the seed sown by him. Many a one sows thistles, and reaps rich and luscious fruits; do not decide, on that account, to sow the seed of thistles. Another, again, plants rarest grains, and rank weeds spring up, and choke them. Do not, therefore, cease to sow good seeds in your path in life. Man does his share, be it good or bad. Success—

the earthly harvest of our deeds—is influenced by the winds and storms of fate, which lie beyond human control. Let no one, then, believe too firmly in his own moral and mental strength, because fortune smiles upon him, nor hold too mean an opinion of himself, and despair of his powers, because success does not crown his efforts. Look with impartial eye upon the condition of your *soul*. See whether your intentions are good, whether you have done the best in your power. Let success not make you arrogant, nor defeat dishearten you. And let us all make it a rule of life ever to be the partisans of the oppressed and the weak.

But why are the weak ones weak, if God be on their side? Why are the oppressed persecuted, and the down-trodden abused? We may as well ask, “Why is the bullock strangled by the lion? Why does the leopard rend the goat? Why is the lamb torn by the wolf? What is the reason for the sorrows of the helpless?” This is one of the great problems of the universe.

Hence, hold not too high an opinion of the lions, the leopards and the wolves of your acquaintance, because their efforts meet with success. Neither think meanly of the sheep, the weak, those that are hunted down, because failure is their lot in life.

“LET THY BROTHER LIVE WITH THEE!”

LEV. XXV : 25-44.

The Hebrew language is especially rich in expressions for poor. We have עֲרֵר, מִסְכֵּן, הִילֵךְ, רָשׁ, אֲבִיּוֹן, עֲנִי, דָּל. On the other hand, it is very poor in words for the idea of wealth. We have the word עָשִׂיר, and possibly also שוֹעֵץ. This peculiarity in the language proves how much attention was paid to the poor by the people that spoke it. In our text a certain term is used to describe the change from wealth to poverty (מִכֶּכֶּךָ or מִיּוֹן). We read, “And if thy brother become poor, and fall in decay with thee: then shalt thou assist him, yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner, that he may live with thee. Thou shalt not take of him any usury or increase; but thou shalt be afraid of thy God: that thy brother may live with thee.” And again we read, “*If thy brother become poor, and sell away some of his possession: then may his nearest of kin come and redeem what his brother hath sold.*” The time set for the redemption of a house within the city was one year; country property could be redeemed within any length of time. If the property was not redeemed, land and village property alike had to revert to the original owner in the jubilee year. And, finally, we read a third time, “*And if thy brother become poor near thee, and (he sell himself unto thee, or) be sold unto thee: thou shalt not compel him to work as a bond-servant.*”

"But as a hired laborer, as a sojourner shall he be with thee; until the year of the jubilee shall he serve with thee.

"And then shall he depart from thee, he and his children with him; and he shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return."

If a man sells a part of his estate, he cannot properly be called poor. According to the Mosaic laws, a man's sale of his own person, or his sale by warrant of the court, to satisfy an unpaid debt, signifies only that he pledges himself to the service of another man for a length of time not exceeding six years. But he is not poor who is able to pay his debts with the fruit of his labor, and to support himself by service rendered to others. To this class of unfortunates, our morning's text refers, men declining in fortune, but not yet fallen, struggling with adverse fate, but yet holding out against its attacks.

The phrase, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is extolled by all, and refuted by none; many a one, however, feels that he has discharged the duty here laid upon him by the gift to the poor of a few cents or a few dollars. The man so reduced in means that he is undeniably poor has passed the time of sorest distress. Not only will the benevolence of others not allow him to want, but the inner struggle, the anguish of sinking ever lower, no longer makes his heart heavy within him. Poverty itself is not so hard to bear as the journey leading to it from a position of affluence. How difficult to part with the first acre, the second, the third! "I was a well-to-do farmer and am still considered such by my neighbors, but I shall soon be compelled to become a simple day-laborer." Judge of the feelings of the man, once the possessor of

a broad estate, with none to dictate to him, but many in his service to do his bidding, when forced by necessity to enter with wife and child, into another's employ, he and his wife as well compelled to act as the servants of strangers! This sorrowful journey from wealth to poverty is frequently made even more difficult by the painful efforts to maintain the appearance of prosperity before the eyes of the world. Though the heart aches, a smile of contentment must play upon the lips! Sore distress under the thread-bare cloak of affluence!

To render assistance to struggling and sinking fellow-creatures, to extend to them a helping hand, and aid them that they may not fall—this is the active love of our fellow-man enjoined on us by the Holy Scriptures. Moses wrote this chapter only to impress the importance of this duty upon his people. It is by no means an exhaustive treatment of the subject, but merely a citation of examples. In it, our sympathy and help are not invoked for naked poverty, crying aloud for bread, extending the begging hand, and ever ready with a word of gratitude in return for the gift; but for him “who falls in decay with thee,” or literally, whose hand sinks helpless at his side. He does not stretch forth his hand to receive help, but you cannot fail to notice that it drops nerveless. He may be endowed with excellent qualities of mind and heart, but to amass and maintain a fortune requires skill of hand as well. To you, not to the world at large, it is plain that his hand hangs useless at his side.

For the care of the destitute, for orphans and widows, for the helpless and aged, charity provides. Their distress is alleviated by public institutions and the united

efforts of benevolent men and women. But public institutions are powerless to aid those succumbing in their struggles against fate, for the publication of their distress would be an even greater trial than want itself. They shrink from confessing to themselves how sad is the future that awaits them. A tender heart, a heart filled with love for humanity, must here seek to bring help in word and deed, unseen of all but God alone. "Thou shalt be afraid of thy God!" And the text adds, "I am the Lord." The thought, "God, the Holy One, sees me, I shall find grace in the sight of the all-merciful Father," is most precious to him who acts as an unknown benefactor to his fellow-creatures in distress. More precious than tears of gratitude; than expressions of praise and approval in countless newspapers; than monuments of marble and of bronze, is the reflection, "I am acting in God's spirit, for God, too, unseen of any one, heals the heart wounded by sorrow, and from his invisible hand, the whole world is fed."

"That man is not poor," some may say, "he has still resources upon which he may depend for his sustenance. 'He has sold away *some* of his possession.' " Thou, who art a friend to mankind, do not wait until all the resources of thy fellow-man are exhausted. As soon as he is compelled by necessity to *begin* parting with his possessions, "then shalt thou assist him," lend him a helping hand. "But we cannot all be rich! Let him sink into poverty. There is still time to help him when he has become quite needy." "Let thy brother live *with* thee." Let it be a pleasure to thee, to have him live *next* to thee, in undisturbed prosperity, not oppressed by care and sunken far *below* thee in worldly station.

We read further, "Thy money shalt thou not give him upon usury." In another place נשך כל־דבר אשר ישך is added (Deut. XXIII: 20); that is, nothing that bites, that makes him suffer shalt thou impose upon him. Do not accompany thy charitable deed with *biting* words. Thy benevolence does not give thee the right to assume the character of a lordly patron.

What Moses calls *selling*, would in our days be considered entering into the service of others. How many young and old men, women and girls nowadays consider themselves fortunate, if the opportunity be afforded them of earning their living in the employ of strangers! Many of them have seen better days, when they themselves were masters and had servants of their own at their beck and call. "Thou shalt not rule over them with rigor." If now thou art become a master over them, be not only their superior, lording it over them at will, but be also a helpful friend, of whom they may seek advice; do not treat them as slaves.

In the *Æneid*, Virgil makes his hero prophesy as to the future of Rome, and he says: "Others will surpass thee in fluency of speech, in arts, in science; thou wilt show thy pre-eminence in exercising rulership over the whole world." Israel can apply this description to its own career, but in a different and nobler sense. Israel is surpassed by others in the number of artists, of men of wisdom, of discoverers and inventors. As men the achievements of Israelites in all human arts may compare favorably or unfavorably with those of others; their *Judaism* plays no part in their worldly success or failure. But in faith and in theoretical and practical humanity, Israel ought to become the ruling power of the world.

Thirty-five hundred years ago these doctrines of humanity stood alone in the world; to-day they are no longer good enough for those that consider themselves representative of the best thought of our day. The belief in one God, and in his pure, moral Law, with its great chapter on humanity, stands upon a royal road of the world's history, and is destined to ride in triumph over the whole earth. A language reveals the spirit of those that speak it. The Germans say *dein Nächster* or *Nebenmensch*; the Englishman speaks of his *neighbor* and *fellow-man*; the Hebrew language uses the word *friend*, as in *וַאֲהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ*, or, as in our morning's text, the still more loving term, *brother*. Not the Israelite alone is spoken of as a friend or a brother; the term is also applied, as our text again illustrates, to the strangers that sojourn in the land.

We live among a nation not inferior to Israel in charity and humanity. Let us strive not to fall short of its standard in acts of benevolence; let us rather exert ourselves to keep in advance of it, so that, when our Law has won for itself the rulership of the world, Israel's may be the undisputed right to bear aloft the banner bearing the inscription, "Let thy brother live with thee!"

KNOW THYSELF.

"And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, then shall the seven lamps give light toward the body of the candlestick."—NUMBERS VIII:1-2.

According to our text, the six lamps upon the six branches of the candlestick were to be so turned as to shed light upon the body of the candelabrum. The lamp was to be a light unto itself, its beams were to serve primarily for illumination of itself.

These instructions form a fitting introduction to the whole chapter, which treats of the conduct of the Levites in their sacred calling. The tribe of Levi was to be a light unto the people, shining before them in precept and example. It was, therefore, necessary for the Levites to be a light unto themselves, examining their own souls by the searching rays of scrutiny and trial, before they could be able and worthy to guide others by the light of their example.

All of us may well take to heart the instruction here given to the Levites. Let us allow our light to penetrate our own souls, before we concentrate its rays upon the thoughts and feelings, the words and actions of others.

To know himself is man's most difficult task as well as his most imperative duty. As we find suitable Biblical verses or pious sentiments inscribed upon the doors

of our houses of worship, so over the portal of a Greek temple might have been read the legend, "Know thyself."

The twofold evil—lack of self-knowledge and excessive illumination of the actions and sins of others—grows worse with the progress of civilization. Among civilized nations, appreciation of right and wrong is almost universal, but not every one possesses the moral strength to be virtuous and live according to law. Hypocrisy lends its aid in concealing deficiencies, and in the place of true morality of conduct we have the *appearance* of morality. When the Empress Catherine of Russia was journeying through the Crimea, her all-powerful favorite had the country lying along the road on which she was travelling decorated, to some distance on each side, with representations of pleasant villages, neat farms, smiling fields and grazing herds of cattle in order to deceive the ruler as to the true, desolate condition of the country.

These painted villages correspond to the gestures, forms of speech and action current in civilized society; they are really painted virtues. Were the civilized world in reality as it appears to the superficial observer, earth would be a glorious, nay, a heavenly abode. The few human beings in the houses of correction are as nothing compared with the vast numbers of men on earth. The men that are at large, if taken to be what they pretend to be, are the very impersonations of virtue.

Yet we know in our hearts that such is not the case. We know that in the forms of speech and intercourse of the most cultivated circles, mere show is offered in place of reality. At the very zenith of Roman culture, Augustus reigned for forty-four years, the most powerful

man in the most powerful realm on earth. In his dying hour, he said to his friend and adviser, Mæcenas, "Have I played my part well?" If a man with the power of Augustus, before whom a world lay prostrate, felt compelled to throw the cloak of hypocrisy over his purple robes; if, in the solemn hour of death, seeing himself as he really was, he made the confession that he had been acting a part in life—surely we can feel no surprise at Kant's assertion that men, in general, in becoming more civilized, develop more and more into actors.

These observations are not recorded as an accusation or a reproach against society. If such were our idea, we should necessarily have to regard civilization as an evil. In reality, no greater honor could be shown to virtue, nor could her divine origin be more clearly manifested, than in the phenomenon that those possessing neither the strength nor the inclination to lead a life of virtue, feel it incumbent upon them to honor it by simulating its appearance. Virtue is like the sun; the reflection cast upon the earth at dawn is followed by the sun himself. So he that practises the appearance of virtue accustoms himself to virtue itself: he grows to love it as we love everything that is habitual, and finally becomes truly virtuous.

Simplicity alone is deceived by appearances. Every thinking civilized being knows that marks of affection, of respect, of decorum, of unselfishness in word or action, may be either a mere pretence or a proof of real feeling. If a person says to me, "Consider my house your home," he is not using an hypocritical phrase for I know that the offer is made with the assumption

that it will not be taken seriously. A savage, on the other hand, would look upon the invitation as a genuine offer.

Imagine a world entirely wanting in decorum, in manners, in a sense of shame, in courtesy, in refinement, a world in which all the poison seething in the heart of men, were poured out in society, in which the number of good actions would be limited by inclination, in which kind words and pleasant smiles would be exchanged only when prompted by true kindness of feeling—how miserable were human existence in this world! Such a condition would mean the end of all sociability, of all tranquillity, of all contentment. Were no word to be spoken, no act performed, however good in itself, unless called forth by correspondingly good feeling, true virtue, which gradually develops under cover of the assumption of virtue, would be but a rare phenomenon.

Decorum, a regard for appearance, politeness, the friendly exchange of sentiments of regard, make up the small coin of virtue. Small change is always alloyed with baser metal, and therefore does not possess the intrinsic value of gold, but nevertheless, it is indispensable as a medium of exchange.

If a fellow-being manifests a kindly disposition towards you, if he is polite and attentive, give him credit for his kindness, even though you think that his heart is not in the act. If a friend fails to meet with your expectations of him, be not too bitter in your denunciations; you should have remembered that you are dealing with a civilized being, who drops many a phrase that he does not mean seriously, because he takes it for granted that he will not be held to his word. Aristotle commences

an address with these words, "My friends! There are no friends!"

On the other hand, let the light of criticism penetrate deeply into your own heart, into the recesses of your thoughts and feeling. Turn the seven lamps of your reason inward upon yourself. Examine, by their light, how your sentiments and actions harmonize with each other. Be not content with the simulation which you excuse in others. You must not pry too deeply into the motives of your fellow-men, but bring the searching light of scrutiny sharply to bear upon the grounds of your own action. Strive *to be* that which you find it well to *appear*. When you light the lamp of reason, let its light be cast principally upon yourself. Be like Augustus, the mighty emperor; like Kant, the strict moralist, the great thinker, and let us add, on the authority of our text, like Aaron, the first high-priest!

CHARACTER SKETCHES FROM THE BIBLE.

MOSES, KORACH, DATHAN AND ABIRAM.

NUMBERS XVI.

Korach speaks of the "people of the Lord" and its holiness. He accuses Moses and Aaron of tyranny and presumption in the administration of the sacred office. We, however, understand the purpose of his accusation; we can clearly see the secret design of his speech to the people. He adopts the tone of all demagogues and office-seekers, flattering the masses, misrepresenting the conditions of the time, and slandering the party in power. "The people! The people's rights!" is their cry. The meaning of their harangue is ever, "Place the power into our hands! Let us guard your rights!" We know well the design of Korach's agitation. His eye is on the high-priest's office. *He* wishes to rule the "people of the Lord." Ambition was the mainspring of his action.

Among all the passions, ambition is the most dangerous. The darkest pages in history have been painted in its lurid colors. When ruled by any other passion, man is fully conscious that he is doing wrong. The gambler, the drunkard, the rake, the thief, the swindler, the voluptuary, all well know that they are pursuing

the path of evil ; but they are, or think themselves, too weak to forsake their wicked ways, and follow their inward promptings to a better life. The man of ambition, on the other hand, believes himself worthy of the honor to which he aspires. He thinks that he is laying claim merely to that which is his due ; he holds that the world is defrauding him of his rights. The stronger his confidence in the justice of his claim, the bolder and the more decided will be the stand taken by him.

Ambition, unlike the other passions which generally rule petty souls, is usually most active in men of genius, of extraordinary ability. To this peculiarity, it is due, that, as far as the public welfare is concerned, it is the most dangerous of all the passions. The power stirring within the man of ambition seeks an outlet for its exercise, a field wherein it may turn its energies to account. The endowments of the man of ambition are not always imaginary ; they may be of undeniable excellence. Recognition of his abilities alone is wanting, nor does the opportunity offer itself for procuring this recognition by proper means. In his impatience he shakes the very foundation of society, calling to his aid the powers of deceit and violence.

Such was the case with Korach. His unsatisfied ambition wrought havoc in Israel, and brought misery to thousands upon thousands implicated in the rebellion. Before Korach's appearance upon the scene, the material for insurrection lay ready in the community, needing but the necessary touch to set it aflame ; ignoble purposes stirred in the hearts of many in Israel. But the order of the community would not have been disturbed thereby. The disaffection of petty minds would

not have burst forth into the flames of rebellion. Courage and decision were lacking. The ambition of one man, however, served to set the whole mass ablaze. All the passions, seething in the hearts of petty men; all the malice which had been ashamed to show itself in the light of day, now burst forth in united strength. The master-passion, ambition, broke the dam of public order, and the full flood of cowardly sinners poured into the camp.

As ambition is the most dangerous of the passions, it is also the noblest of them all. To devote thought and scheming, toil and energy to low, sensual delights, to material gain in gold or goods, to drink, to gambling, is the mark of a base and vulgar nature. For, when our objects in life are so unworthy of our dignity as human beings, as are these, then the nobly-born soul must degrade itself to the position of slave to the body. But honor is one of the finest of the pleasures of life; honor is a true delight to the soul. The body must deny itself much, must sacrifice much, must do its utmost, so that the soul may enjoy the fulness of honor. Korach, as the most dangerous of the mutineers, merited the most severe punishment. His name, therefore, is identified with the rebellion; heavy was the penalty paid for his guilt. He was the guiltiest among the rebels, but not the worst. Therefore, despite his guilt, we find that, in other sections of the Bible, the descendants of Korach are men highly honored in the community. We find poets among them and famous singers, by their efforts contributing much to the beauty of the Temple service.

Therefore, the Bible says, "But the sons of Korach did not die." The error of the father was not visited

upon the children. His noble qualities, his ability to work his way out of the common mass, and, from the height attained, influence the life of the community—this was the inheritance of his children and his children's children.

The children of Korach, who, according to the Holy Scriptures, did not die with their father, include not only the heirs of his body, but his *spiritual* descendants as well. Whoever feels within himself the ability to be of use in the community; whoever seeks to be the right man in the right place, will also feel the desire to occupy this place, and stepping forth from the seclusion of private life, to take upon himself the burdens, the cares, the dangers, and in the end also the ingratitude of public service.

Korach's spirit thus lived again in Alexander, in Julius Cæsar, in Napoleon—all of them great men, fitted for the high position which they won for themselves by virtue of their superior powers, but censurable for the means employed in attainment of this end; for their violence, intrigues, breach of faith, and bloodshed. Like Korach's, theirs, too, was an end of horror.

Let us turn to the picture presented by the life of Dathan and Abiram.

Quite unlike Korach, these men seem neither dangerous nor worthy of the least respect. Their characters were low, and their motives mean, nor did they possess the necessary strength to do harm. They met the advances of Moses and his offer of a peaceable adjustment of difficulties in a malicious spirit, with foolish and irrational words. Like all low-minded men, they looked with hatred upon any one of noble aims, and, therefore,

they were instinctively the personal enemies of Moses, the idealist, the man of lofty thought. They reproach Moses with having led the children of Israel out of Egypt, the land of slavery, it is true, but of slavery sweetened with milk and honey. They failed to appreciate the work of Moses as the savior of the people, their teacher and leader; even the promise of fertile lands for their children was without value for them. They wished to have fields and vineyards for themselves. They belonged to that class of people, to whom nothing is worth the effort expended on obtaining it, except money and worldly goods, fields and meadows; to the class that would joyfully surrender Mount Sinai for a vineyard, a world of ideals for a tangible possession.

Dathan and Abiram, too, have passed away, but their vulgarity of soul still lives on in the world.

In every undertaking, the question is raised, "Will it bring us to the land flowing with milk and honey? What is the use of diligent study of the Law, of scientific investigation, of poetry and art, if they cannot help us to obtain fields and vineyards, if they will not fill our coffers with gold?"

Material blessings are by no means to be despised. Who does not strive to possess them? But side by side with our efforts for earthly possessions, we must still find time for higher things. When our interest or our participation in a good cause is asked, we should not always inquire as to the worldly advantage that we may gain from our efforts. In his anxiety for his acres and vineyards, his milk and honey, man must not lose sight of the demands of the heart and the soul, the welfare of mankind, the good of posterity, immortality and the life

hereafter; otherwise he will perish in the desert of worldly interests as Dathan and Abiram sank into the earth, and were lost forever.

The third character sketch is that of Moses.

Dathan and Abiram seek indemnity in fields and vineyards for the losses which, they maintain, they have suffered in leaving the land of Egypt. To them, Moses says, "‘I have not taken away an ass of any one of them.’ Have I asked for one beast of burden in return for my services? I have sacrificed my life, all my strength in this cause; where are *my* fields and *my* vineyards? ‘Nor have I done wrong to any one of them.’ Where is even *one* man, whose rights I have injured in the fulness of my authority?"

Here we have the picture of a man sacrificing himself for the world, for its improvement and elevation. He took upon himself the leadership of the people, and wielded his power like a great man, and that, at a time, when there was little prospect of honor or success, when he could see only labor and care in store for him. When he made his first petition to Pharaoh, there surely was none to envy him: no Korach, no Dathan, no Abiram showed his face then. Later, however, when seeming impossibilities had been achieved, when the daring undertaking had been crowned with success, and Moses stood before them in the fulness of his power, then the envious sought to injure him, and to wrest from the leader, tried and true, the reins of authority. From his height, however, he could call to them: "For whose sake do I stand here upon the watch-tower? Not for my own sake, and not for the sake of those near unto me. I climbed this height, and now hold it in *your*

interest. My office has brought me no field and no vineyard, neither milk nor honey has been my reward. Mine was the very beast of burden that carried me on the journey, from Midian into Egypt, undertaken in behalf of your liberation."

“PEOPLE OF THE LORD.”

NUMBERS XI : 27-29 and XVI.

In the “Sayings of the Fathers,” we find the sage advice to scholars to choose their words carefully in their discourses, so that their pupils may not misunderstand them, and thus be led to spread erroneous doctrines.

The quarrel between Moses and Korach furnishes a striking example of the harm that may be wrought by the misconstruing of even the sublimest truths. Sin is rarely shameless enough to show itself in all its nakedness, and say, “I am sin ; I know what I am, and you, too, may know it. It matters not to me that you recognize me in my true character.” No ; sin speaks not thus, but rather loves to clothe itself in the garb of virtue. Many a misdemeanor is not committed, solely because it is impossible for the offence to maintain the appearance of respectability. Rudeness seeks to excuse itself, saying, “There is no deceit in me. I am perfectly frank and open.” Hard-heartedness explains its position thus : “We must not spoil the poor by heaping benefits upon them,” and the Israelite that seeks to make his religion as convenient to himself as possible says, “This is philosophy !”

In the last Sabbath’s portion, we were told how two highly-esteemed laymen in Israel had prophesied to the people, because “the spirit rested upon them.” Eager

informers lost no time in telling Moses of the occurrence. To them, Moses said, "O, that we might render all the people of the Lord prophets; that the Lord would pour out his spirit upon them!"

Moses had spoken of Israel as a "people of the Lord." Shortly afterward, Korach appeared at the head of a misguided party in rebellion against the existing order, with an argument taken from Moses' own speech—"people of the Lord!"

No doubt, the greedy office-seekers were ashamed to oppose their petty malice and their utter worthlessness to the sterling character of Moses. Therefore, they acted in the capacity of advocates of the "people of the Lord." The majesty of the whole people could, despite his greatness, be boldly set up in opposition to Moses. Had not Moses himself called them "people of the Lord?" If it was true, as Moses had said, that every one in Israel might be a prophet, then surely every Israelite was worthy of the high-priestly office. Thus sin reared its head in the camp, under the mask of an advocate defending a people defrauded of its rights. The Israelites, dupes as they were, marked the words of their leaders, and though they failed to grasp their meaning, they hurled at Moses and Aaron the reproach, "It is you who have caused the people of the Lord to die!"

In using the phrase, "people of the Lord," Moses did not mean to imply that every Israelite, from the fact of his Israelitish birth, was a better, a more gifted man than others; that he was, on that account, fitted for highest honors. Moses adds the stipulation, "That the Lord would put his spirit upon them." God, however, does not lay his spirit upon one unworthy of it,

even though he be of Israelitish birth. Upon Eldad and Medad, who worked earnestly in the camp as teachers and preachers, without any thought of reward in gold or land or honor, upon them rested the spirit of the Lord. Their *ability* to teach, their *willingness* to teach, and the *modesty* which led them to choose to work for the common welfare without honorary titles and badges of office, such must be the characteristics of the men that can form a veritable "people of the Lord!"

Not so Korach. To work quietly and unostentatiously for the common good was not to his mind. Strange to relate, in Israel's entire camp, there were but two men who, as "people of the Lord," offered themselves as teachers in the camp, while more than two hundred and fifty, as "people of the Lord," offered themselves as candidates for the office of high-priest!

Would it ever have occurred to a common Egyptian to stir up a revolt for the purpose of obtaining a priestly office? Our knowledge of the history of Egypt is constantly having fresh light cast upon it, but as yet we have had no account of a rebellion against the priestly order, or of any uprising of the lower against the upper castes. In Egypt, the idea of a holy nation, of an entire people forming a kingdom of priests, was utterly unknown. On the contrary, the people, in general, were filled with the consciousness of their ungodliness, and of their unworthiness to approach their gods as priests.

Moses corrected this error. He maintained that the whole of the Israelitish nation is holy with reference to rights and privileges; but he asserted as well that not every Israelite is therefore a saint. "The Lord will make known who is his, and who is holy, that he may cause

them to come near unto him ; and him whom he shall choose will he cause to come near unto him." Accident of birth cannot sanctify an Israelite. A holy life alone can bring a man near to God, and only the "chosen" one, not he that thrusts himself forward, may approach the Lord.

How frequently in life do we see teachers and preachers, statesmen and philosophers misunderstood, their words and speeches misinterpreted ! The unfortunate division of the Israelites into Pharisees and Sadducees, for instance, is said to have owed its origin to the misunderstanding of a doctrine concerning retribution. Who can measure the rivers of blood, whose source may be traced to the misuse or the misconception of the terms, liberty, religion, enlightenment, and the like ? Is it not to the misinterpretation of certain passages in the Holy Scriptures that the origin of the Christian religion has been traced—of that mighty religion, whose adherents are scattered far and wide ; whose influence has changed the very current of life in hut and palace, in village and town ; whose numerous sects control completely great sections of our globe ? There are, in our nineteenth century, millions of men that adhere to political parties, knowing naught but the watchword, and swearing by it, though they comprehend the underlying principle as little as Korach's followers knew the meaning of their cry, "people of the Lord." Phenomena, similar in character to these of world-wide import, may be observed, on a smaller scale, in our daily lives. How much trouble and strife might be avoided in the home, in business, in social and congregational affairs, were but this wise saying constantly borne in mind :

"Ye sages, be careful in your speech, that ye be not misunderstood, nor your meaning misconceived." Words are like fire: useful if carefully guarded, but dangerous when employed, as children use fire, without thought or caution. A single word of doubtful meaning in compacts between nations and kingdoms not infrequently has been the cause of long years of bloody warfare, and, in private affairs, of weary law suits and great losses.

The wise lesson which we may clearly read in our text ought to impress two things on our minds: it is well to accustom *one's self* to a mode of speech that cannot be misunderstood. Again, the words of *others* must not be weighed upon too exact a scale, nor should the worst possible construction be put on them. It may be that your brother expressed himself infelicitously; but as well may it be that you have been infelicitous in your interpretation.

QUALITY AND QUANTITY.

"And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams,"—NUMBERS XXIII : 1.

Upon this verse our sages comment thus: "Why *seven* altars? Because up to that time seven pious men had erected altars, pleasing in the sight of God, namely, Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses. 'Their sacrifices were certainly pleasing in thy eyes; but is it not more fitting for thee to receive offerings from seventy nations than from seven individuals?' Balak asks of Deity. He was answered, we are told, by a saying of Solomon's, 'Better is a piece of dry bread and quiet therewith, than a house full of the sacrifices of contention.'"

In the physical world, quantity often supplies the place of quality, bulk is substituted for strength. Two weak men may succeed in vanquishing one strong opponent, a thick board may bear more than a thin bar of iron.

The experience that quantity may compensate for lack of quality leads to the application of this principle in the intellectual and moral world. The bungling artist seeks to hide his lack of skill by laying on his colors in thick patches; the poor musician covers the bareness of his composition with the noise of instruments; the liar seeks to give strength to his statements,

of whose incredibility he is well aware, by repeated protestations of his veracity. The hypocrite employs countless words and kisses, pressures of the hand, and all other possible outward signs of good-will as proofs of his friendship and good faith, which in reality, are almost minus quantities. So, too, in religion, it is believed that lack of quality may be made good by added quantity. For instance, the followers of a belief or the members of a sect are counted, and the great number of believers is looked upon as the religion's chief glory. God is supposed to be honored by a great number of meaningless religious practices. The strength of a religion is judged by the outward glory and magnificence of the temple, the service and the machinery of divine worship. It is the chief pride of the vast majority in religious communities to see their spacious temples well filled. The truth and excellence of one's belief are attested by the crowd of its professors, by the power and wealth of those that bow beneath its yoke, by the worldly prosperity enjoyed by believers, and denied to unbelievers, or at best grudgingly bestowed upon them.

Were we to allow such witnesses to the truth as numbers, power and social success to have weight with us in judging religious truths, then we Israelites would hold but a poor opinion of our faith. We are not numerous nor powerful, neither does Judaism pave the way to social success for its followers. But truth does not always dwell with the majority. How frequently have the champions, the teachers of truth yielded up their tortured souls on the funeral pyre, while tens of thousands of the people in their wild delusion looked upon the horrible scene as a sacrificial service pleasing in the

sight of God. So, too, thought Balak, in the song of Balaam. "Why," says he, "wilt thou find pleasure only in the altars of this little nation? Why wilt thou recognize the homage of only seven men in the long period of time between Adam and Moses? Behold seventy nations are at thy service. Comply with their wishes. Be God as they conceive him, the God of the majority!"

Let it, then, be a matter of indifference to us how many millions we count among our followers. Our confidence in the truth of our belief is not shaken, because some statisticians estimate the number of Israelites at only five millions, nor are we strengthened in our faith, when others, exaggerating, assume eleven millions to be the correct number. We, likewise, refuse to swell our ranks with proselytes. Yes, even though thousands fall away, and are lost to us through seduction or frivolity, not the least harm is thereby done in our eyes to the truth that we profess. "The righteous is an everlasting foundation." Were a supporter of the truth to stand alone in his belief, *he* would be the pillar, the upholder of his world.

The split in Israel, in religious matters, is so open that it cannot be ignored by silence on the subject. Israelites of the old way of thinking are still in an overwhelming majority. That, however, does not prove that they are in the right, nor can this fact alone make their future secure. Quantity cannot compensate for lack of quality. On the other hand, the defection of so many highly cultured men, of men of wealth from orthodoxy, proves nothing against its tenets, for, "Better is a piece of dry bread, and quiet therewith, than a house full of the sacrifices of contention."

Young Israel, the Israel of reform, is still in the minority. It cannot be reproached with this paucity of numbers, as a weakness, for the question is one of quality not quantity. It is striving earnestly to increase its forces, but even should it succeed, should tens of thousands join its ranks, it would be intrinsically no better. In order to prove true superiority, young Israel must show its advantage over the old in benevolence, in a stern sense of justice, in cultivation of heart and mind, in moderation, in modesty, in peace and chastity of family life, in the domestic virtues in general.

When a Balak of the future ascends the seat of judgment to pass sentence on the party contests in Israel, and cries out in his animosity, "Behold, how this people is divided against itself. Here thou seest a portion, and there a portion. Surely, then, thou mayest curse them and denounce them"—let us hope that this will be the answer: "I see neither wrong on the one side, nor perverseness on the other. The Lord his God is with each of them." Balak said, "Behold, I have built seven altars, and offered seven bullocks and seven rams thereupon, and," as our sages continue his speech for him, "Abraham brought only one small ram as an offering. I, however, have brought seven rams, and even seven bullocks besides." This is the climax of heathen piety. Every grove had its own altar, every height its idol. Festivals, assemblies of the people, innumerable religious practices, meaningless and irrational, filled up the measure of a heathen's days; countless sacrifices, culminating in the sacrifice of the best-beloved children, constantly bled on the altar. Moses, in forbidding private sacrifices, destroyed thousands of altars at a blow. Only one

altar was allowed by the Law—the altar in the one Temple in the land.

He that keeps within due bounds in his religious life, he that lays more stress upon quality than upon quantity, he is pious after the manner of Abel, of Noah, of the patriarchs, of Moses, who, in the outward expression of their adoration of God, limited themselves to building *one* altar, to sacrificing *one* lamb. Whoever, on the contrary, holds that piety demands many religious observances—he is a follower of Balak, who built seven altars, and let seven bullocks and seven rams smoke upon them.

In the Biblical section, from which our text is taken, we read that at the sacrifice, the king “was standing by his burnt-offering, he, and all the princes of Moab.” The heathen idea that eye and ear must be attracted by the pomp and show of the public service has been banished neither from the church nor from the synagogue. Excessive importance is still placed upon appearances, upon costly show, upon the presence of individuals prominent in the community by virtue of wealth or position. Abraham sacrificed a ram without peal of organ and chant of choir; he stood alone with his son and his God. Mount Moriah was made sacred for all time by his sacrifice; even to-day it is ascended with emotions of reverence, while the site of Balak’s pompous sacrificial service is forgotten; neither does any one care to seek it.

Every feature that contributes to the dignity of the services and to its attractiveness for the visitor is of value in our eyes, but it would be highly un-Jewish to overestimate the importance of these outward things, and to look upon them as essential, and err to so great an

extent that we should not consider a service worthy of the name, one that we could really attend with propriety, unless the rich dresses of the ladies rustle; unless organ and choir pour out a flood of music; unless a preacher appeals in grandiloquent language to the congregation from the pulpit.

“Better a piece of dry bread, and quiet therewith,” better a house of God filled with devotion, which is after all the satisfying bread of the pious heart, “than a house full of the sacrifices of contention,” *i. e.*, a house of worship, beautifully finished and decorated, but wanting in the true devotion that brings peace to the heart.

THE TESTIMONY OF OUR LAW AMONG THE NATIONS.

- "See, I have taught you statutes and ordinances just as the Lord my God commanded me; that ye may do so in the midst of the land whither you go to take possession of it.
- "Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding before the eyes of the nations, that shall hear all these statutes, and they shall say, Nothing but a wise and understanding people is this great nation.
- "For what great nation is there that hath gods so nigh unto it, as is the Lord our God at all times that we call upon him?
- "And what great nation is there that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as is all this law, which I lay before you this day?
- "Only take heed to thyself, and guard thy soul diligently, that thou do not forget the things which thy eyes have seen, and that they depart not from thy heart all the days of thy life; but thou shalt make them known unto thy sons and unto thy sons' sons,"—DEUT. IV : 5-9.

No age or clime has failed to produce individuals of pre-eminent wisdom and justice, within the ranks of Judaism as well as beyond its pale. But in this morning's text, Moses exhorts the Israelites, saying, "It is not sufficient for Israel to produce individuals of ripened judgment and ability. Israel must show the world how an entire people may be elevated above the level of the surrounding nations, through the influence of the divine Law, which I gave unto it." The actions of the child of worthy parents or of the pupil of a school of good repute are observed more closely, and his faults of omission and commission are censured more severely than the deficiencies of him whose training has been neglected,

both at home and at school. We proudly extol the merits of the Law of Moses, vaunting its antiquity, its existence as a light in Israel, at a time when all the peoples round about were sunk in the darkness of heathenism. Since, then, we acknowledge that we have had so greatly the advantage of other nations in enlightenment and truth, it will naturally be inferred that we ought equally to excel other and less favored classes of mankind in piety and nobility. If we, scattered members of Israel, were content to rank merely among the average members of the communities in the midst of which we reside, severe censure would be our rightful portion. Abraham was our father; Moses, our teacher; the Torah, our text-book in religion; the prophets, our guides; from our midst, the Psalms rang out into the world. Surely, then, we ought to raise ourselves above the level of mediocrity. We have no right to complain then, if an Israelite is more severely condemned for violations of the truth, or of right and morality in general, than the many sinners of other religious beliefs. Neither must we consider ourselves victims of injustice, if the errors of individuals among us are laid to the account of the entire community. Do we not ourselves say, "Every Israelite is responsible for his brother?"

Not the Law of Israel, but the life of Israel in accordance with the Law can win honor and respect for us among the nations. Then, too, the talent or the genius of one of our fellow-believers should not be expected to elicit from the surrounding nations the exclamation, "Nothing but a wise and understanding people is this great nation!"

The honor which Israel shall enjoy among the nations,

according to Moses' prophecy, and which he exhorts the people to strive to deserve, is not in the least affected by our relative position to the followers of other beliefs in commerce, in art or in science. Enlightenment and nobility of soul, piety and morality, manifested by the mass of the people—these alone are the conditions under which Israel will win the respect of the nations of the earth. Let the wisdom and piety of Israel, which Moses promised should be rewarded with the regard of mankind, be practically applied, in the conduct of Israel in the ordinary relations of men—in the intercourse of husbands and wives, of parents and children; in a moderate enjoyment of the good things of life; in the erection of benevolent institutions; in humanity; in unswerving fidelity to religious convictions.

But is not this promise of reward, as a spur to the fulfilment of duty, in opposition to the requirements of strict morality? Is it right for the Bible, that divine volume, to find room in its pages for the demand that man allow human approbation to influence his conduct? Would it not have been better to say, "Do what is right, regardless of the opinion of the peoples round about you?" There is, however, no nation on earth that does not pride itself on the possession of some real or fancied pre-eminence, and it is by the thought of these excellencies that the bond of nationality is strengthened, and popular pride in nationality stimulated. Moses wished to inspire such pride in his people. Could he, then, have set a loftier aim to their ambition than the hope of wresting from the lips of the nations the praise, "This nation has the most rational conception of God. Its laws are laws of justice and mercy. The people serve their

God, and live a life of righteousness, manifesting justice, truth and love in their relations to each other and to strangers!"

Let us not boast of our written Law, looking upon it as a crown for our heads, if the Law resides not within our heads as well; nor is it proper for us to array ourselves in the cloak of humanity and justice, of truth and the knowledge of God, as taught by our religion, if the being, enveloped in the cloak, is a stranger to these virtues. The Law is not meant as an honor to *us*; *we* must rather honor it in our daily lives by living in accordance with it; that is to say, we must "sanctify the name of the Lord."

There remains for our consideration only that part of our text which reads, "For what great nation is there that hath gods so nigh unto it as is the Lord, our God, *at all times that we call upon him?*"

This verse emphasizes, in the first place, the omnipresence of God in contradistinction to the heathen deities who were local in jurisdiction. "Our God," says Moses, "is everywhere the same, upon the land and on the sea, upon mountain-tops as in the valleys, on earth and in heaven. He hears us, and is nigh unto us whenever we call upon him. He is near to us also in the sense that we have no mediator between God and ourselves." Another lesson is here taught us as well. God is nigh unto us only if we call upon him. If we wish to keep alive within us the consciousness of the existence of God, we must turn to him from time to time, thus reminding ourselves that a God reigns over us, a God of mercy and justice. The blessed result of prayer is not always a direct response to our petitions;

but few prayers are answered in the sense that we have changed the will of God according to our own will. Surely, it is best that God's will and not ours is done. Prayer is, however, never without its reward, for through it, we refresh in ourselves the feeling that God is near to his creatures. A voice within us seems to say, "Son of man, there is a God, the director of the fates of men, who is ever nigh unto you. Trust in his wisdom, fear his justice and his tribunal! Let the thought of his holiness fill you with a solemn dread!" This is the echo, the answer, in a pious heart, of the earnest prayer ascending from its depths.

If God is not to be forgotten in Israel, we must direct our attention more earnestly to our Law; we must be more zealous in our attendance at public worship; there to join the assembled congregation in praising God, and in listening to the exposition of divine truths, so that God may, indeed, be near unto us in heart and spirit.

NEITHER ADD THERETO, NOR DIMINISH THEREFROM.

"What thing soever I command you, even that shall ye observe to do: thou shalt not add thereto, and thou shalt not diminish therefrom."
—DEUT. XIII : 1.

This prohibition is contradictory to the development of religious law and life among us; truly, there has been much "added thereto" as well as "diminished therefrom."

Nor could it be otherwise. The Law was not made for angels. Man is ever subject to the vicissitudes of time, place and circumstances, and these influences are responsible for the continual flux and flow in his spiritual life.

This, however, is the meaning of our text: "Leave the Law of Moses as it is. Add nothing to it, claiming for your interpolation a divine origin, and thereby giving added value to the *Law* and more authority to *your* views and ordinances. Neither take anything from it, nor force any meaning out of it, if there happens to be something in my Law displeasing to you, or inconvenient, because out of season. Your lawful religious authorities may regulate your life according to the demands of time and place, as the Holy Scriptures say, 'Thou shalt not depart from the sentence which they may tell thee;' but these decrees must be promulgated on their own responsibility."

The old teachers remained faithful to this injunction. It was not a matter of idle play, when they ascertained the exact number of letters, words and verses in the Mosaic Law, or estimated the number of Mosaic ordinances, fixing the positive commands at three hundred and sixty-five, and the prohibitions at two hundred and forty-eight. However religious law and life might be modified and altered by additions and eliminations of the rabbis and by popular custom, the Law of Moses, as such, the basis for all these changes, was never to be affected. A sharp, dividing line was carefully maintained between divine and human additions—between "Mosaic" and "rabbinical." Hillel established seven rules, and Rabbi Ishmael increased their number to thirteen, as guides in the interpretation of the Law of Moses. The results of these interpretations—the true explanations as well as the distorted complications—were always looked upon as rabbinical. The six hundred and thirteen Mosaic commands and prohibitions were neither increased nor diminished in number by the labor of scholars. The Talmud—the repository of the mental activity of the rabbis—never became a New Testament. It served, and to some extent still serves, as a religious guide, but it was never regarded as other than a human, a rabbinical product.

We, in our days, ought to be especially mindful of the words of our text, neither "to add thereto nor to diminish therefrom," to honor the book in the form in which it has been handed down to us. In forcing its way out of the narrow bed of the Holy Scriptures, life has torn away much of their banks; it has spread itself over many fields, now a source of blessing, and again

leaving destruction and devastation in its path. Let us take heed that we may not lend a hand in the destruction of the dikes still remaining.

Holy Writ must patiently permit many of its decisions to be disregarded by impetuous life. It must allow science to examine its pages with a critical eye. But we ought not to put upon it the indignity of so wresting its sense as to find sanction and approval in its pages for the very havoc wrought in it by the force of circumstances. Israel has often returned to the Law after long intervals of neglect. As a good mother keeps the modest rooms of their early home ever ready against the possible return of her haughty children, so the Holy Scriptures are always prepared for returning Israel. Whenever Israel *does* return, let it find everything just as it left it.

Neither should we "add thereto." We should not attempt to make the Holy Scriptures more beautiful than they are. Nor should we seek to read into them great ideas, great truths and principles of humanity, which have come to us "with the process of the suns," and which we fail to find in the Holy Book. We should be grossly unjust towards the world, towards the many generations with their men of great endowments of mind and heart that have come and gone, were we to ascribe to our Holy Book every possible development in doctrine and legislation, in enlightenment and nobility. Many of our most honored, our most highly valued spiritual possessions, many ideas contributing greatly to man's welfare on earth and in the hereafter, were produced, taught and put into practice simultaneously with the teachings of Moses, as well as after the time of that great law-giver. In comparison with the moral order

of our day, the Law of Moses may be likened to the acorn by the side of the mighty oak, whose wide, many-leaved branches throw dense and far-reaching shade upon the ground. The acorn went through various processes, became warmed in the earth, sprouted and developed, and when it had penetrated to the surface, and stepped forth into the sunlight, it had to pass through many seasons, drinking in their changes of light, heat, rain, air and gases; it had to be blown about in all directions by storm and tempest, and add ring by ring to its circumference, ere it grew to be the heaven-aspiring oak. In like manner with the Holy Scriptures as the nucleus, the germ, the root of all development, our system of morality has grown; our views have become clearer, our feelings have become ennobled, our ideas of justice have become purer and more elevated, and especially has science advanced with giant strides. Excessive praise provokes criticism. He that insists upon finding all our modern conceptions of nobility and virtue in the Bible, is responsible for the consequences, if the sharp critic, seeking such ideas, and failing in his attempt, pronounces harsh judgment upon the sacred documents.

Time and all nations have been working at the structure of religion for four thousand years. We Israelites occupy a position in the very midst of this work of culture. Upon us there lies a twofold obligation: to co-operate heart and soul in the structure of a religion for all mankind, and not to imagine that the Israelite whose conduct seems unexceptionable when judged by Biblical or rabbinical standards, appears perfect before God and the world. Religion is never complete, nor is man ever perfect in his relation to himself, to God and

to his fellow-man. Not Mount Sinai alone bears the heaven of our laws and doctrines; the Alleghanies and the Rockies ought also to be supporters of these sublime ideas. Not only by the seventy elders in the desert and seventy-one revered heads of the Sanhedrin, which sat in *Lishkhath haggazith*, but also in the legislatures, in Congress, even in every common council, is the cause of religion advanced or injured—in Boston as in Rome, in each place according to its character. Religion makes up our whole life. We either sin against it, or live a worthy existence according to its dictates. In reading a book, we read religion either as ennobled or degraded, as adulterated with frivolity or deepened with thought. He that writes a book writes religion even though religion be far from his thoughts while he is at work. Thus Humboldt, Dickens, Schiller, Longfellow involuntarily have added more to the circle that our century, too, is making about the trunk of religion's tree, than many a rabbi who devotes his whole life to the *conscious* study of religion.

Religious communities should, therefore, always maintain friendly relations with one another. All can learn from one another. All are filled with the desire to advance the cause of religion. Side by side with this aim, we Israelites have yet another task. We must guard strictly our ancient religious documents, that nothing be "added thereto nor diminished therefrom." Let him, who may seek them in hundreds or thousands of years, find them as they were when handed to us: neither better nor worse, neither increased nor diminished in contents. Mountains may be moved, and hills be levelled; the heavens may grow old even as a garment, but the word of the Lord will stand forever!

COMPETITION.

"Thou shalt not remove the landmarks of thy neighbor, which they of old time have set, in thy inheritance which thou shalt inherit, in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it."—DEUT. XIX :14.

Although the removal of a landmark is neither more nor less than theft, and though robbery and depredation of all kinds are distinctly prohibited by the Bible, this kind of stealing receives especial mention, as peculiarly deserving of punishment. In all ancient codes, the removal of a landmark is condemned in the severest terms. The art of surveying was not known in those days, nor had the ancients registers in which landed possessions were recorded according to their size and boundary. The landmark was, therefore, the only absolute proof of the possession of real estate. In view of the great importance of fixed boundaries, the Romans had a special tutelary diety for them—Terminus; in our text, also, God is mentioned particularly in connection with the prohibition against removing a neighbor's landmark—"in the land which the Lord thy *God* giveth thee to possess it."

In the course of time, this commandment lost its significance; even after the removal of a landmark we can find the correct boundary. But it is only in its application to fields and meadows that this law has lost its importance; respect for the boundary marking off our right from that of our neighbors still forms a great chapter in the book of morality.

Upon careful examination, respect for existing boundaries will be found to constitute a great part of our idea of morality. In the home, boundary lines are rigidly drawn between husband and wife, between parents and children; in business houses, between buyer and seller, between lender and borrower, between laborer and employer, and between civil functionary and citizen. Each one has his own peculiar rights and privileges, and to the rights of each, certain boundaries are set. Of him that steps beyond the limit of his authority, it may be said, "he removes the landmark of his neighbor." In our morning's discourse, we shall consider only one phase of this far-reaching prohibition—the interpretation put upon it by our sages, which, under the designation *מסיג גבול* (unfair competition), was held in high regard in truly pious Jewish circles. According to this conception, an Israelite is not allowed to cripple a fellow-man's means of gaining a livelihood through competition. In the Bible, the height of popular felicity is thus described: "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree with none to make them afraid." This indicates peace at home and abroad. But, in our days, no one could, even under such favorable conditions, dwell in security "under his vine and his fig tree," not even in the most powerful state, guarded by millions of soldiers; not even under the watch of the most vigilant police force. The name of the destroyer of a quiet, comfortable existence; of the thief of the spiritual peace of the merchant; of the noiseless war between man and man, is competition, or as our sages express it *מסיג גבול*. The official cannot find unalloyed pleasure in his office, nor the business

man in his daily pursuit, nor the workman in his hire. A man says to himself: "My field is bearing fruit. After much honest and arduous toil, I may at length hope to reap a rich harvest." Suddenly competition stretches its hand beyond the boundary line, and his hopes are dashed, his harvest blighted.

Alas! this unlimited liberty to bring ruin upon one's fellow-man is the very pride and boast of our time! It is true, the results of this competition in increasing means of intercourse and in developing industry can scarcely be estimated; they have indeed attained a dazzling height. In progress, one year at present is equal to one hundred of former times. But how great the price that we have paid for this advance! How has morality suffered! If a man feels uncertain of his future, he hastily seizes upon every means in any way justifiable before the law in order to reap the richest possible harvest in the field of the present. And how many true, honest, industrious men does competition daily drag into financial ruin! How many worthy families fall into misery and decay, how many struggle for existence, waging a daily fight with the current of competition—a fight that makes all rest, all enjoyment of life impossible!

We do not speak of inevitable competition. When two are constrained to seek bread in the same field, and must snatch from each other one-half the means of subsistence, it is dire want that oversteps the boundary. We speak only of the thousands with whom competition is not a matter of necessity, of those that can reap a rich harvest within their own limits, and nevertheless cross into the boundaries of others, that they may glean there as well.

Even here, the individual is scarcely to blame. The spirit of the age looks up to competition as its good genius, calling upon it for aid, and burning incense before it as before a deity. What can the individual do but yield himself up to the current of the time, and extend his territory as far as possible beyond his own boundaries? Every one must be prepared to have his boundaries invaded on the morrow, even as he oversteps the boundaries of others to-day—to have the waters drawn away from the source of his existence, even as he guides the stream of another's livelihood into his own channel. The warning of Moses is unheeded to-day. "Thou shalt not remove the landmarks of thy neighbor," sounds like folly in the ears of the present generation. But little remains of the old Jewish respect for the "landmark" of one's neighbor.

If the command to love one's neighbor, in its application in deeds of benevolence, could heal the wounds of society, the problem before us would be a comparatively easy one. The many institutions for the relief of human misery speak well for the active charity of our days. Neither can we complain of lack of justice. Good sense and good-will are ever present to give us the best possible laws, although the law, it is true, has not always the best servants to see that its bidding is done. What we do lack, however, is *equity*. Equity lies midway between justice and benevolence; it is unwritten justice and charity towards all, rich and poor alike.

It is vain to hope to dispel the serious and dangerous questions of the time that lie like threatening clouds over all countries, by multiplying charities, or by means of legislation. "Thou shalt not remove the landmark

of thy neighbor is sound *morality*, and belongs under the head of equity, not of justice or law. This is the great work for future generations: to procure universal acknowledgment for the Mosaic doctrine of respect for the landmark of one's neighbor; so to limit the jurisdiction of competition that it may prove, not a curse, but a blessing to society. The conscience of the people must be awakened, must be made as alive to the force of the unwritten law of equity as of the written law of justice. A disregard of the demands of equity ought to seem, to the public sense of justice, as dishonorable as a violation of the written law of the country; it ought to seem as dishonorable to remove an invisible landmark, as to climb into a window for the purpose of committing a theft.

"Let thy brother live with thee." As far as it lies in thy power, let him enjoy his life and be secure in his happiness "under his vine and his fig tree." This is not the land that thou hast seized for thyself, but the land that the Lord has given to thee.

CHIVALRY.

"Remember what Amalek did unto thee, by the way, at your coming forth out of Egypt.

"How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, all that were feeble behind thee, when thou was faint and weary ; and he feared not God."—DEUT. XXV : 17-19.

I believe that I can guess the thoughts of many during the reading of this text. The sound of this cry of revenge from barbarous times, you think, ought not to be heard in these days of enlightenment and humanity.

And even granted that we, peace-loving Israelites, were eager to give heed to this cry ; were eager once more to seize the sword of revenge, to wash out with blood old scores against this hereditary enemy, where could we find Amalek to-day, inasmuch as the command to extirpate the Amalekites was carried out to the letter in the days of Hezekiah ?

Let us consider the significance of this command in the days of Moses and its importance to us.

According to one principle of division, the history of civilization falls into three great periods.

The first includes the time in which man led a life of complete lawlessness ; then followed the period of the rule of unwritten law, which, in turn, led to the sway of the written code.

It would be impossible to determine the length of the first period—the time in which men led a life of license,

fighting and destroying one another in the struggle for existence—the time pictured to us in the Bible in the story of the first brothers. This subject constitutes a boundless field for investigation, a field in which Darwin, his predecessors and his followers have garnered rich harvests. So much, however, we can state with absolute certainty: the moment of man's first impulse towards culture must have coincided with his earliest suspicion of the existence of higher spiritual powers, powers of superhuman strength, surrounding him in invisible form. Or briefly stated, civilization took its rise in the fear of gods. We say fear of *gods*—for this fear must have assailed the savage on all sides to restrain him on the path of wild desire, to make him voluntarily do or leave undone what he would have preferred to neglect or to perform. The idea of one God does not carry with it sufficient terrors for primitive man to curb his wild nature. This vague fear of the gods, which fills the savage with sudden dread, without giving a decided bent to his thoughts and actions, develops into the religion of the second period of human civilization—a fixed system of doctrines and statutes directing thought and action with binding force.

Upon the field thus picketed by religion, custom flourishes, developing into the law of habit, which in turn becomes the unwritten law of society.

Whatever may be said of the worth or worthlessness of early religions, they must be allowed one merit—they taught man obedience to binding laws.

The law of chivalry was the most important of these unwritten laws. An exhaustive definition of this idea, a consideration of its development in the course of time,

especially during the Middle Ages, would fill a volume. It suffices for our purpose to bring before the mind, the seed and kernel of the virtue—honor in arms, the only honor recognized by half-civilized peoples, the honor of strong bones, of muscles of iron, and nerves of steel; of a hand unswerving in directing the club or other weapon of attack and defence. Such honor could be gained only in the contest of the strong with the strong, of the armed warrior with him who was challenged to fight and hence prepared for defence. In a further stage of development, not only did it bring no honor to a man to attack another from behind, to fall upon the unarmed man with weapons, to overthrow the weak, but, on the contrary, it brought him only shame and disgrace. In a still higher stage of development, it became a matter of duty for the man of honor, not only to *spare* the weak, but, indeed, to grant them protection, to constitute himself the champion of women, children, the aged and—the priests.

As the fear of the gods may be considered the a-b-c of culture, the first impress of the shovel on the path of civilization, so the virtue of chivalry may be called the first reading lesson, the first outpost of civilization.

Amalek had taken none of these first steps in civilization.

“He met you by the way”—you, who were travelling onward, not suspecting harm, unprepared for battle.

“He smote the hindermost of you; the aged, the women, the children, the sick, the lame, when your warriors were faint and weary,” not in a condition to invite the attack of men of chivalrous honor and feeling.

"He feared not" the gods. The very first impulse, the earliest germ of civilization was wanting in him.

A community so utterly devoid of law, of honor, of fear of God, bore in itself the seed of destruction. It would surely have met its fate—extirpation—without the command of Moses. The Mosaic decree merely shows us, by means of an illustration, the phenomenon that we have observed as the result of a law of nature, in the history of many other equally barbarous hordes. There is no decree in the United States ordering the extermination of the Indian, and yet the remnants of his people are melting away like snow in the sunshine of spring; for, in the Indian of our day, there lives, also, no spark of chivalry. He fights from ambush, attacks peaceful travellers, murders in cold blood women and children, the aged and the sick, and puts his defenceless prisoners to death by horrible means, untroubled by any thoughts of his gods. So Moses summoned the children of Israel to the task performed, in their time, by the Regulators of the South, or the Vigilance Committee of California, who though criminals before the law, were yet benefactors of society. He wished them to free the nation from this public scourge, to remove this stumbling block from the path of civilization.

Such was the significance, in the ancient Biblical days, of the commandment of revenge in our text. But what lesson can it teach us? What can we, in its annual repetition, gain from it?

The answer to this question brings us to the third epoch in civilization—the period of written law.

Written law has limited the activity of the virtue of chivalry, but it has not completely discarded it. Written

law is gross matter, unwritten law fine spirit. He that makes the written law the sole guide of his life, leaving undone only those things that it forbids, and performing none but its injunctions, may be a good, tax-paying citizen, an important man on exchange, a man whose honesty, according to the letter of the law, cannot be impugned. He may live without shame, and be buried with pomp and glory—nevertheless, he is but a poor creature; he is not of the knights; in spite of his liberty, he is a slave.

We have defined chivalry as meaning, honor in arms. Such it was at one time, and still remains in those states, in which great, standing armies are necessary as a protection against foes from within and without. In those countries, the bearer of arms is highly respected, and in point of honor, he is more sensitive than other men. In the United States, the bearing of arms in time of peace is not accounted an especially honorable profession; if a man were habitually to walk our streets girt with a sword, he would be laughed at and jeered. But our definition speaks of "*honor* in arms." Even if we omit "arms," the best part—honor, the unwritten law of chivalrous manhood—still remains; it cannot be couched in writing, nor formulated into a law. It is the *bouquet* of character, the delicate perfume of the soul, which, despite its delicacy, makes its presence manifest in the whole man, in his every act and thought.

The written law says, "Thou shalt not lie." But how much falsehood there is in the world which the law cannot touch—falsehood under the protection of equivocation in speech and action, under all possible evasion and excuses made to appease conscience! Not so the man of chivalrous honor. He is filled with that noble pride

which will stand before no man with eyes downcast, he wants to look every man openly and honestly in the eye. But he cannot do so, upon whose tongue there is a lie, who finds it necessary to conceal speech and countenance behind the screen of equivocation. Therefore, the man of chivalrous honor is true, where hundreds are false.

The man of chivalrous honor is faithful. Falsehood is the weakness of a heart that dares not show itself in its true colors. A man of chivalrous honor scorns such weakness and timidity.

For the same reason the man of chivalrous honor is better equipped to resist sin than others. Open sin brings shame, and to sin in secret betokens fear of man and his criticism. Both these emotions are foreign to the nature of chivalry.

The man of chivalrous honor stands erect before the great ones of the earth. He bows no lower than they before him. He is no flatterer, but he shows kindness and lenity towards the weak and the lowly; he is never brutal.

The man of chivalrous honor does his duty without boasting; he is too proud to covet the applause of men.

In view of the great competition in business life, and the poor equipment, with which so many are compelled to enter the struggle for existence, it would be unjust to condemn those that lie in wait to pounce upon any opportunity of gaining an advantage; that feel driven to employ any artifice within the boundary line of threatening law. Such action, however, is not chivalrous. The man of honor does not lie in wait in the path of life. He marches straight forward in his daily occupation, as the lion goes forth for his food.

The chivalry of man manifests itself most strongly in his attitude towards the weak.

He whose capital is large and whose soul is noble and chivalrous, suffers his weak competitor to live side by side with him. He crushes him not with the great power at his disposal. The mighty stream allows the brooklet to ripple on at its side; it does not swallow it up in its own greatness.

If a man is hard-pressed by business troubles, powerless in his relations to a man of chivalrous soul, unable to impose conditions, but compelled to submit to any that may be offered—the high-minded man will spare the weak man, nor will he take all possible advantage of the misfortune of his neighbor which the written law may allow him to take with impunity.

Any one attacked from behind is weak. To speak evil of a man behind his back is sinful, but it is especially offensive to the spirit of chivalrous honor, which requires a man to take the part of his unjustly slandered fellow, to defend the absent, who is unable to defend himself.

Woman is weak, not only by virtue of her frailer, physical constitution, but also by reason of her temperament and the restraint put upon her by nature, custom and propriety. The man of chivalrous honor is, therefore, especially distinguished by his delicate consideration for the weaker sex.

The minority is ever the weaker element in a community. It is unchivalrous for the majority, because of its written right to do so, to tyrannize over the minority; especially is this true in cases in which the questions are of a religious nature.

There is, however, an obverse side to the virtue of

chivalry. Even in the olden times, when chivalry constituted the very basis of society, the knights were wont rather to arrogate to themselves more rights than were their due, than to help others to rights of which they had been defrauded. So, in our days, we find men of chivalrous nature, who go far beyond the requirements of the written law in their performances, but who also frequently fail to come up to the requirements of the law, when it becomes inconvenient for them to do so. In this way, they lose a proper standard of judgment for themselves and for others.

The confusion of the chivalrous honor of manhood with outward marks of honor presents a still darker picture. Undue anxiety and effort for distinction in public life show aught but a knightly spirit. The more a man or woman struggles for honor among men, the further does he or she travel from the path of true honor. So great are the means required for obtaining the gauds of public honor, the path to this goal is often so degrading, if indeed, it be not impure and filthy, that a few years of *honors* frequently pave the way to a lifetime of shame. And even should this dearly-bought outward distinction of a worthless soul last through life, what boots it? Nothing is gained thereby except that thousands of eyes are fixed upon the man, and thousands of lips pronounce his name, but truly not to honor him. For the more a man steps into the foreground, the better target does he become for the critical shots of envy; retributive justice feels called upon to do its duty. Character, not social position, makes the knight. The lord may be a slave, and his serf a nobleman.

Our text thus teaches us that the virtue of chivalry,

the bud of civilization, which, in our day, has opened into the full blown flower—the unwritten law of honor—is an ornament to man. It further tells us that, though the days of coat of mail, of shield and battle-axe be past; though the times of Charlemagne; of the Cids, the Bayards, the Richard Cœur de Lions; of Saladin, of Götz and von Hutten lie far behind us, there is still plenty of opportunity for the simple citizen to perform deeds of chivalry. “Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek.”

Strive to keep all vulgarizing influences far from you. Avoid everything that may dishonor you in your own eyes, and strive further to root out every remnant of the deceitful, cowardly Amalekite spirit that may still lurk in your heart. In the temple of God, “everything speaketh glory” and honor.